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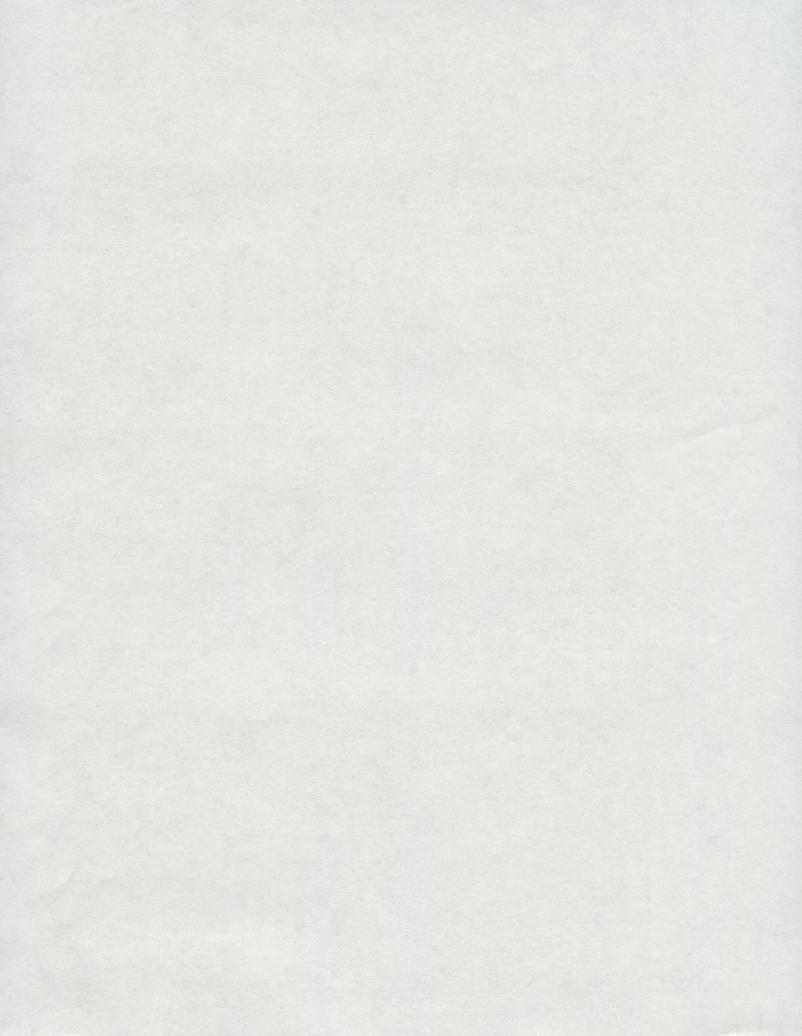
A Necklace of Diamonds:

A Family in Flight from Hitler

By Jenny Grishaver Weinshel

Jenny Grishaver Weinshel

PII Redacted



Chronology

May 10, 1940 First failed escape attempt to Belgium by car

May 14, 1940 Second failed escape attempt to England by boat.

April 9, 1941 Papa's diamond business is taken over by a German official

Early June 1942 Nanny is caught in a raid on the Amstel river and is imprisoned for two weeks.

July 1, 1942 Germans start with the deportations.

July 15, 1942 Nanny receives notice from the Gestapo to appear the next day, July 16, 1942 for deportation.

July 16, 1942 Family escapes to Roosendaal, Southern Holland. They go to Essen, Belgium, and then to Antwerp on the same day.

August 1, 1942 Family leaves Antwerp, goes to Brussels, then to Moeskroen on the Belgian-French border.

August 3, 1942 Family crosses Belgian-French border to Tourcoing, France.

August 4, 1942 Family arrives in Paris.

August 5, 1942 Family arrives in Dijon. Cross the border to unoccupied France that night.

August 7, 1942 Family arrives in Lyon, France.

Early September Family receives exit permit to go to Spain.

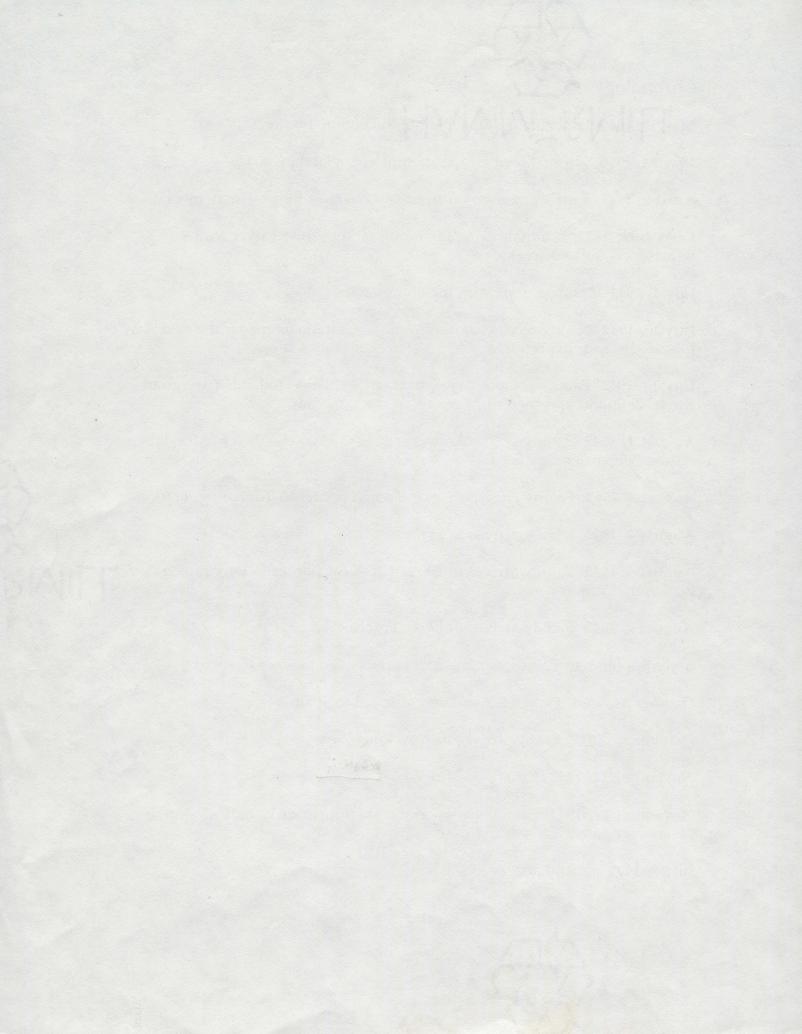
October 24, 1942 Family leaves Lyon to travel to Spain.

October 26, 1942 Family arrives in Barcelona.

November 11, 1942 Family goes to Vigo, southern Spain.

November 16, 1942 Family leaves on the "Marquees de Camillos" ship to Jamaica, the British West Indies.

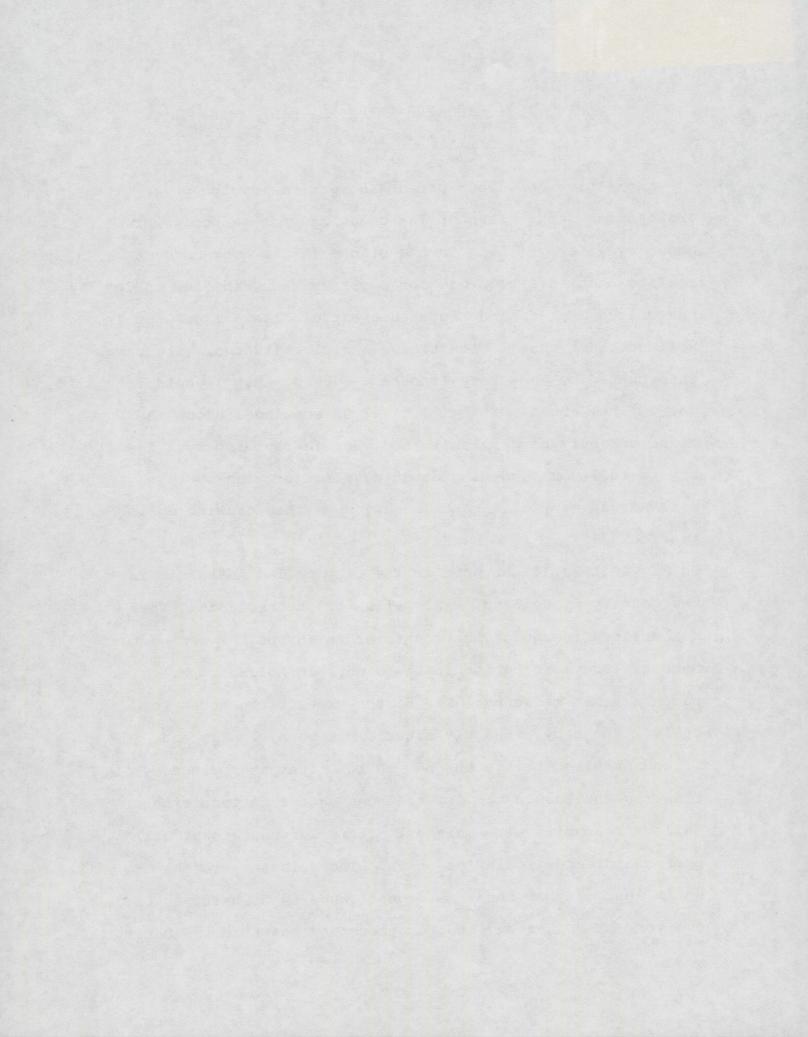
July 8, 1943 Family arrives in Miami.



For my children and grand children AMSTELDIJK 104

Some time ago, your parents gave me a lovely grandparent book. It contains questions for me to answer about my life. Filling in the blanks in the book made me realize that this book was for a grandmother who grew up in the United States, and had an uneventful life. I grew up in Holland. Not that I didn't have a nice childhood, but it was interrupted by some very important events, that I would like you to know about. It will give you some idea about the lives of your grand parents, and your family history. I will try to tell you something about myself. Growing up in Holland was very different in many ways than growing up in America.

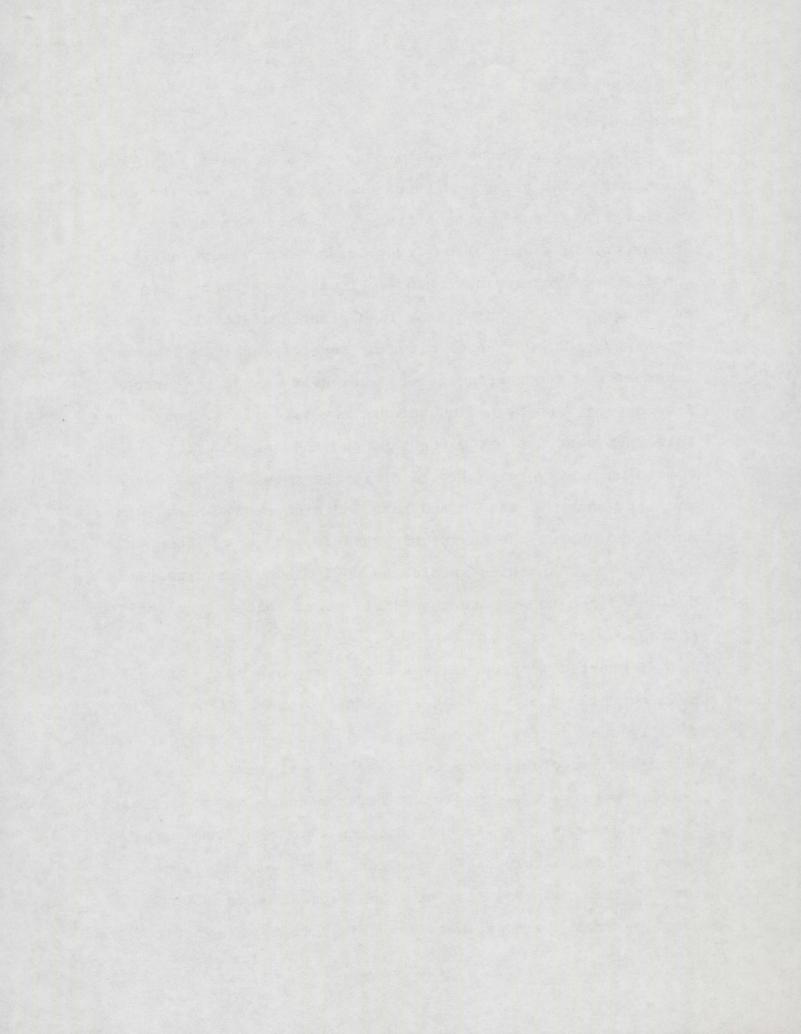
On May 4, 1929, I was born in the city called Amsterdam in the country of Holland, also called the Netherlands. The Netherlands is one of the countries in Europe. I was born at home as were most babies in those days in Holland. My parents named me Jenny. The doctor came to the house to deliver the baby. Shortly after I was born, family and friends visited to see the new child. Everyone brings flowers; and the custom is, that one eats a certain cracker called "beschuit" with muisjes. It is a round toast with butter and candy sprinkles on it. The "muisjes" are the sprinkles. It has the same significance as drinking a toast, everyone stands around and together they toast to the babies



good health.

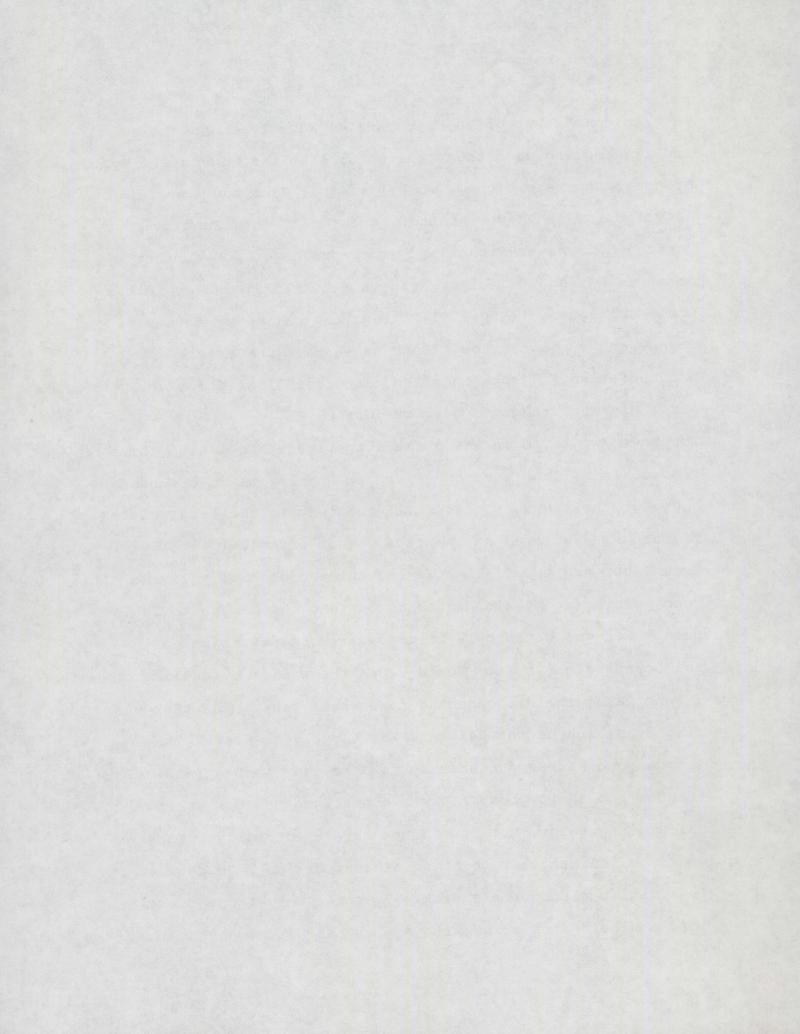
My parents had a nurse for the baby and a housekeeper to keep everything else going. Mothers used to stay in bed for weeks to recuperate from giving birth. Our family name is Grishaver, so I was called Jenny Grishaver. I have a sister who is three years older than I, I was the second child in our family. My sisters' name is Marianne Grishaver, we call her Nanny. She was named after my fathers mother. I was named after my mother's mother. Her name was Jans Aronson-Ketelapper. She begged my parents not to call me Jans. told them that she hated the name and they should pick something pretty for a little girl. So they kept the "J" and made it Jenny. I have blond hair and blue eyes, which is the answer to one of the questions asked in the book. Another question is, "anything special happen?" When I read that, I decided I had to do more than just answer that in the small space provided.

I started wearing glasses when I was six years old. I used to tell my mother that I couldn't see all of her. They finally took me to an eye doctor who said I was correct, and he prescribed glasses for me. I am far sighted and the lenses were sort of thick. It never bothered me that I had to wear glasses, it was only difficult to keep them on my nose. I have a very small nose, and there was little room for the frame to rest. My nickname, answering another question from the book, was "zonnetje," it means sunshine.

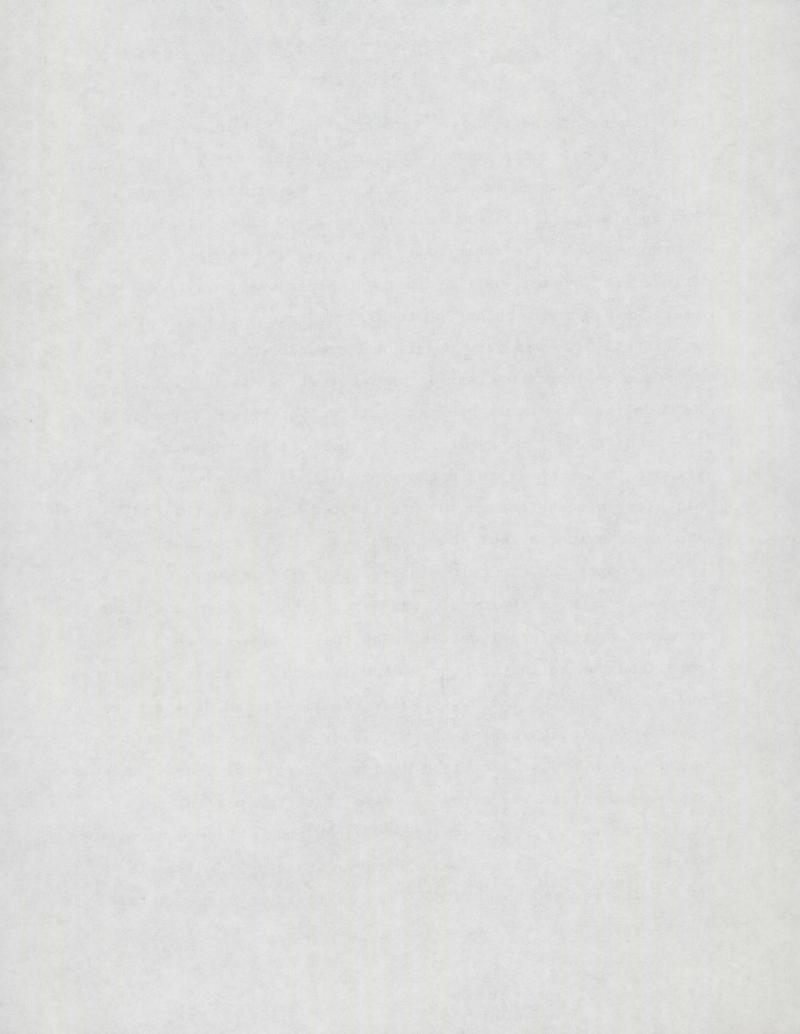


They told me I was given that name because I always smiled and laughed and made them feel good; like the sun does. My grandparents were, (on my mother's side) Jans Aronson-Ketellapper, and Meyer Aronson, and (on my fathers side) Marianne Grishaver-Frank and Samuel Grishaver. My mother's name is Adriana Grishaver-Aronson (1903-1979) and my father Louis Grishaver, (1900-1961). Everyone called my mother Jeanne and my father Lou. Both names have the French pronunciation. I hope this isn't too complicated for you, but I did want to give you some idea.

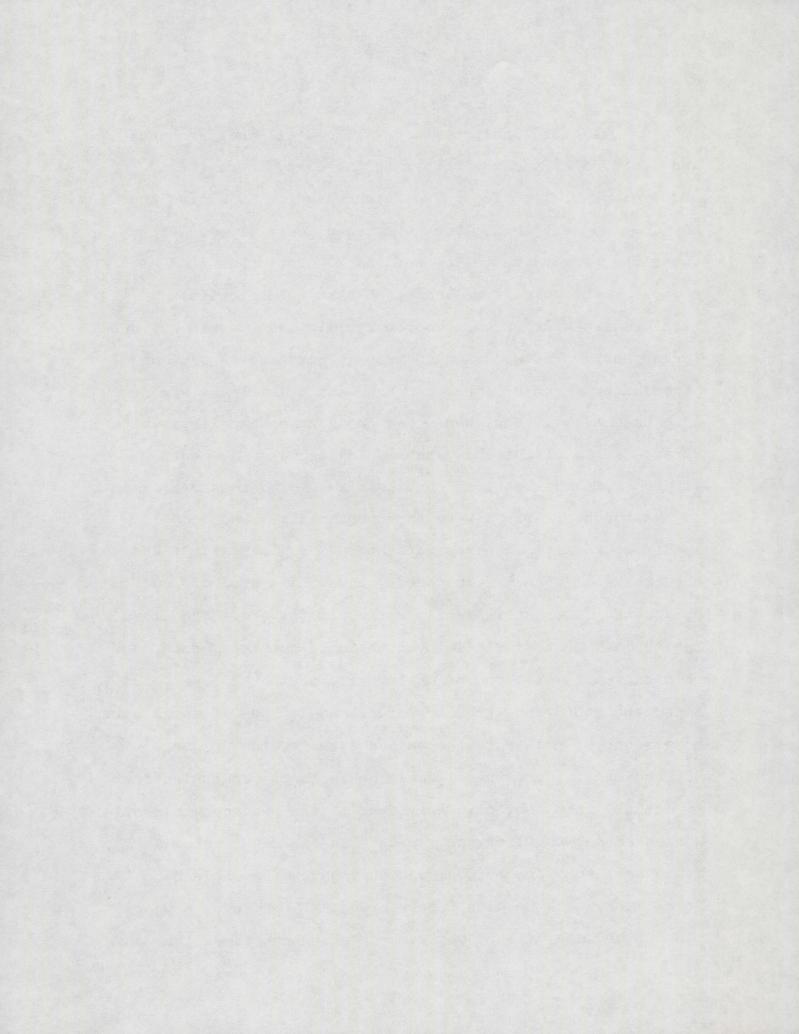
The house we lived in was a small apartment house with three floors. In Holland everyone lived in apartments no one had a house of their own. It is still that way in the large cities of Europe. We lived on the first floor of Amsteldijk 104. Each floor had two flats. We had three bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and a separate toilet room. Here we would call it a powder room, with just a toilet and sink in it. You'd flush the toilet by pulling on a long metal chain, connected to a water tank. The tank was almost as high as the ceiling, way above your head. kitchen and bedrooms opened up to a balcony in the back. kitchen had an ice box. It was a small wooden box we now call refrigerator, but it did not have electricity. Once a week the ice man came to bring a block of ice. He carried it in a burlap cloth on his back. It was a very large piece of ice, and he'd pick it up with a pick and put it on the top



compartment of the icebox. This kept the food in the ice box relatively cold. The iceman would always chip off a piece for me to suck on. Ice was a real treat. We had friends who had an electric refrigerator with real ice cubes, I always wanted to go to their house to get a real ice cube in a drink. In the back of the apartment house where we lived, there were gardens belonging to all the ground floor apartments. It was very pretty and green back there. sounds more luxurious than it was, but it was very pleasant. We didn't have central heating, but two pot belly stoves in the front rooms. Every morning, my parents or the house keeper started the fire in the winter time. It used coal, big black pieces that would be delivered once a month, and stored in a special coal bin. The rest of the apartment was without heat; and, in cold winters, it could be very unpleasant. My mother would put a hot water bottle in my bed to warm it up before I got in. The sheets were damp and cold, and the hot water bottle made it much easier to get in bed. The front of the house where the living and dining rooms were, looked out on the Amstel River. The Amsteldijk was a very broad street lined with many beautiful trees. often went across the street to wave to the people in the boats that went by. It was fun to watch them. People always waived back. In winter when the river froze solid, I could just walk over and go skating. People loved to skate there, and it was often very crowded.

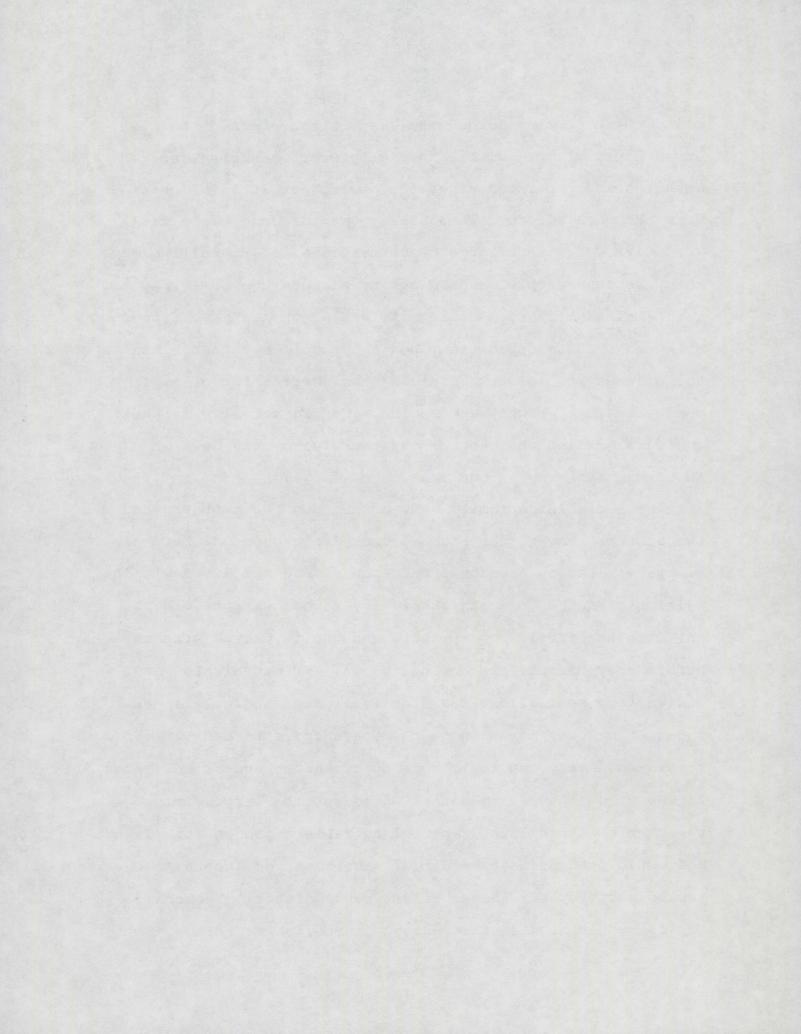


It was a beautiful neighborhood. I knew all the merchants and could go around the corner to the candy store for my daily piece of licorice. The Dutch licorice is salted and may come in very large, cookie sized pieces. Those were my favorites. They are yellow and black. The other store I enjoyed was a sort of delicatessen that sold pickles. Pickles were kept in huge wooden barrels and I would buy one for a penny. The woman would wrap my purchase in a piece of paper after she had dipped her hand and arm all the way down into the barrel. She then wiped her hand on her large white apron. Just talking about those pickles makes my mouth water. My mother sent me out sometimes to go to the milkman or the butcher. There were no supermarkets, and each specialty had it's own separate store. I especially liked the "melkboer"; they sold cheese, eggs, milk products and cold cuts. The entire family worked in the store and lived behind it. Best of all I loved the cold cuts they sold, and cold cuts are still one of my favorite meats. The De Jongs owned the store and knew my parents well. One of their sons became one of Hollands most famous authors, Lou de Jong. I noticed many times, when I would go in to buy something for my mother, that they gave away ends of the sausages to people who asked for them for their pets. So one day I asked if I could have some for my dog, and they gave me a whole bag full. They knew we didn't have a dog. I was about 6 years old. Every day Mr. de Jong came to the house to deliver our



milk. He brought a large metal can that contained the milk, and scooped it out with a special pewter measuring cup. My mother held up her container for him to put it in. These were the days before milk bottles. Mr. de Jong was a tall very dark man with a large black mustache. I am telling you this, because people used to ask my parents how come they had such a blond blue eyed child. It was a joke to say "from the milk man". I wondered then, how they could say that since the milkman was so dark haired. There were a lot of small merchants in town who were Jewish. We did not live in what was later called the ghetto; but there were many Jews in Amsterdam and many in our area.

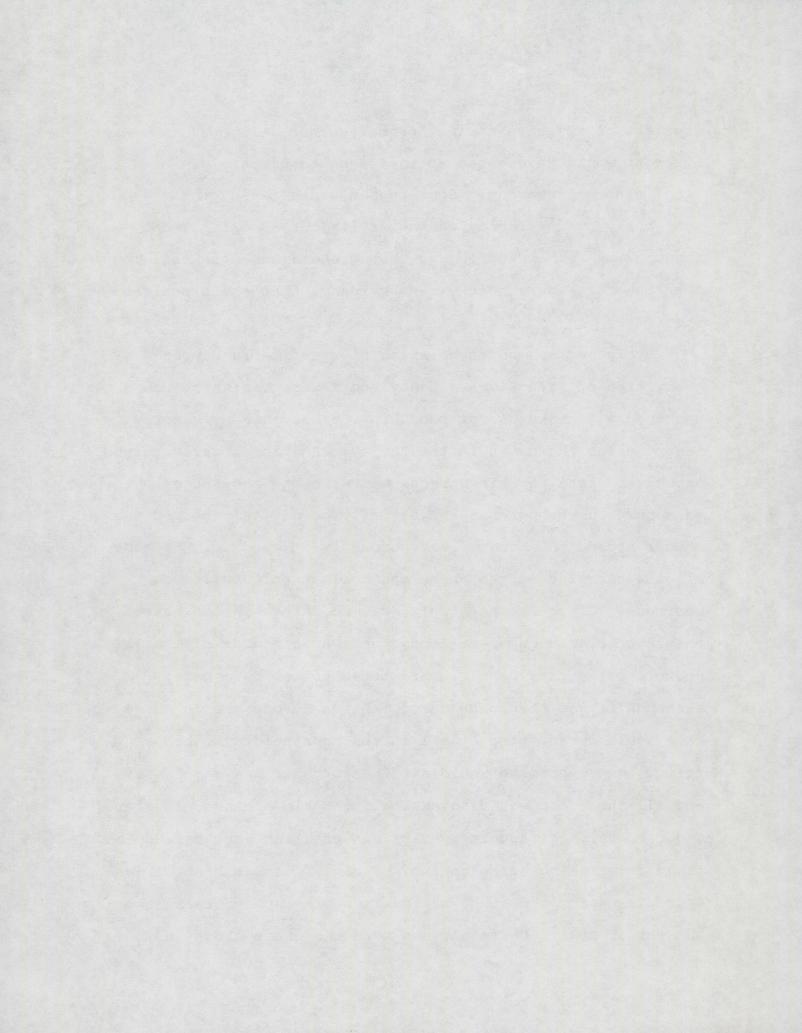
We had a large family. My mother had two brothers and two sisters, my father had two brothers and one sister. I always visited my Aronson grandparents. We all lived within walking distance of each other. My mother was the oldest child in her family, so my aunts and uncles played with us before they had children of their own. Friday nights were always very special, it was "family night", and we all got together. Sometimes we'd go to my grandparents and sometimes, every one would come to our house and so on. When it was at our house, my mother would set the large dining room table with a lovely white lace table cloth on it. Then she would put the most wonderful assortment of sweets on the table in different- shaped silver candy dishes: bonbons, hopjes, other hard candies, dried fruits, cakes, ginger,



cookies, gebakjes (pastries) and many other delights.

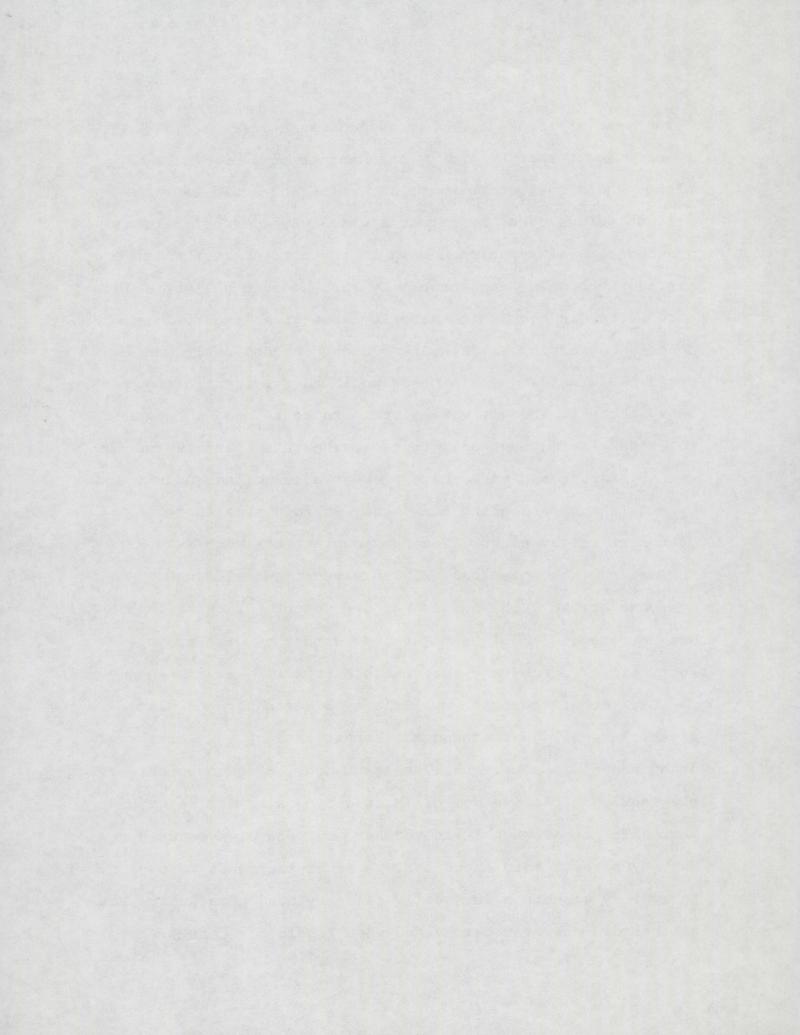
Everyone would have eaten at their own home, this was an after dinner gathering. Some people would first go to synagogue, but my family was not religious at all. I do remember my mother telling me that grandma was more religious than the rest, but there was no evidence that she practiced it.

My father seemed to be ahead of his time in almost every area of life. When Nanny and I were babies he would be the one to take us for rides in the baby buggy, usually reserved for the women in the family. People actually turned around to stare at this strange man with the baby buggy. When our housekeeper had her day off, he not only helped my mother around the house, but thoroughly enjoyed it. He made all the curtains in the house and build furniture for our bedrooms. Of course he didn't just do things in the house; he played a good game of tennis and was a member of a well known local socker team. My father also loved to bake, although it was then unheard of, that a Europe man in those days would do anything at all in the household. We had a friend, whose husband would sit in his chair and say "water", and all the woman would scramble to get him a glass of water. I guess everyone thought my Papa was peculiar just because he liked doing things like baking. I always wondered why it was appropriate for men to be bakers in stores and restaurants. but not at home. Certainly men were the great chefs in



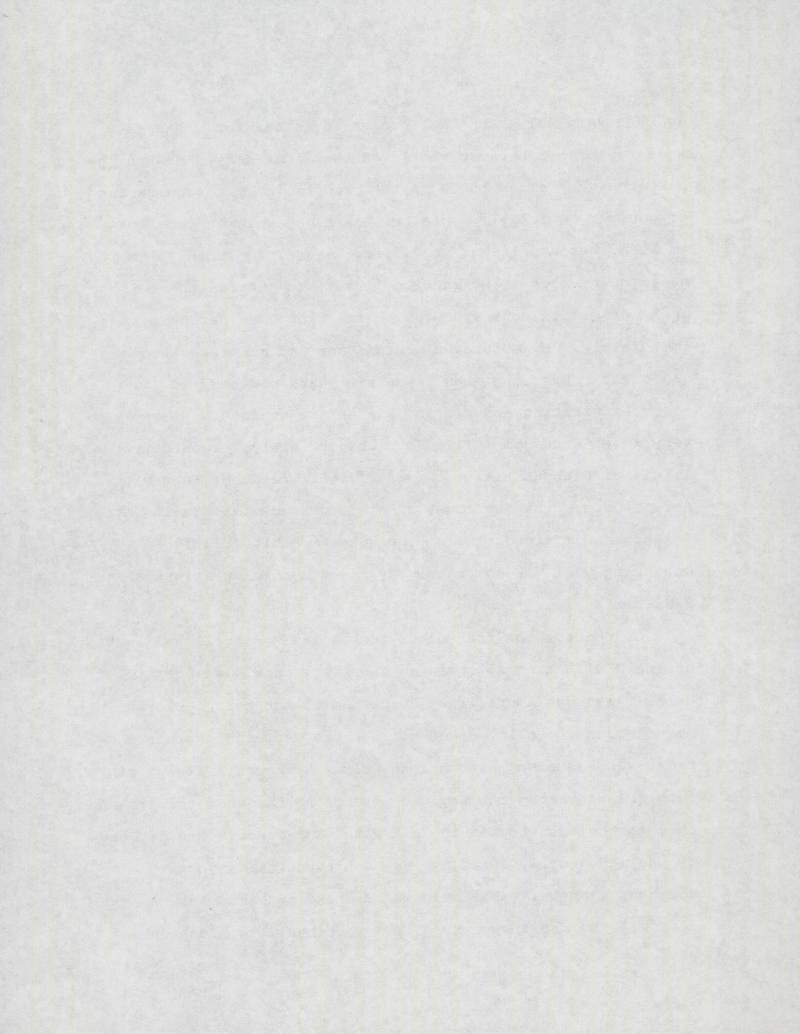
Europe and still are. Anyway my dad was a great baker. So it came about that he and my grandmother on every Friday night, would have contests to determine who could bake the most delicious cake. My father's was always perfect, and my grandmothers always dipped down in the middle. But which one tasted the best? Grandmothers by far, because she put a lot more butter in hers which made it taste great and fall in the center. We drank tea, ate, and laughed a good deal; One could be sure that some Aronson would have a fascinating story to tell. When it was my time to go to bed, I couldn't tolerate missing even one minute of the fun. Later we would eat some fruit and maybe have a sweet after dinner drink, and by midnight before going home, they would decide where to meet next Friday night. You can imagine, how much I looked forward to those evenings. Strangely enough, although everyone ate so much, no one was overweight. I think this was so because all of us "traveled" either by bike or on foot, along with a very active athletic life.

My fathers parents, my "Grishaver" grandparents also lived close by, just around the corner in fact. My Grishaver grandfather was a very tall, elegant man; my grandmother a pleasantly attractive woman. Milk and cookies were always available for me when I visited her, but she always asked me what my parents said about her. I never knew what to say, because my parents never really said anything about her. But neither did she ever believe me when I told her that. She



dressed very well, and was interested in fashion. People made fun of her because she loved beautiful hats. How things have changed, since those days! People in Holland made fun of you very quickly. My father was happy when we came to America, because it was so different here. He said "I am never going back to Holland to live." In America there is so much less class consciousness. He felt at home here almost immediately. My Grishaver grandfather had a stroke when he was quite young; and when I was six years old he died. remember visiting and kissing him before he died. He was a very sweet man whom I liked but unfortunately, remember so little else about him. However, I still remember that when he was dead, "they" brought special tubs to wash him in. My friends and I stood outside their house a bit frightened wondering what was going on. My parents told me it was a Jewish ritual.

On Sundays the four of us took a family stroll. It was boring I didn't enjoy those outings very much. We used to call it Noorder Amstellaan, Zuider Amsellaan terug. Terug means "back". So it was one street one way, and another one back. It was also quite a long walk. My parents always ran into friends along the way who were doing the same thing; and they most often stopped to talk with each other. One day one of the men angrily asked my dad "don't you teach your daughter manners." She refuses to shake my hand, (as was the custom.) My dad answered. "If I were her, I wouldn't shake



your hand either." This is the sort of thing one remembers so well, when your parent protects you!

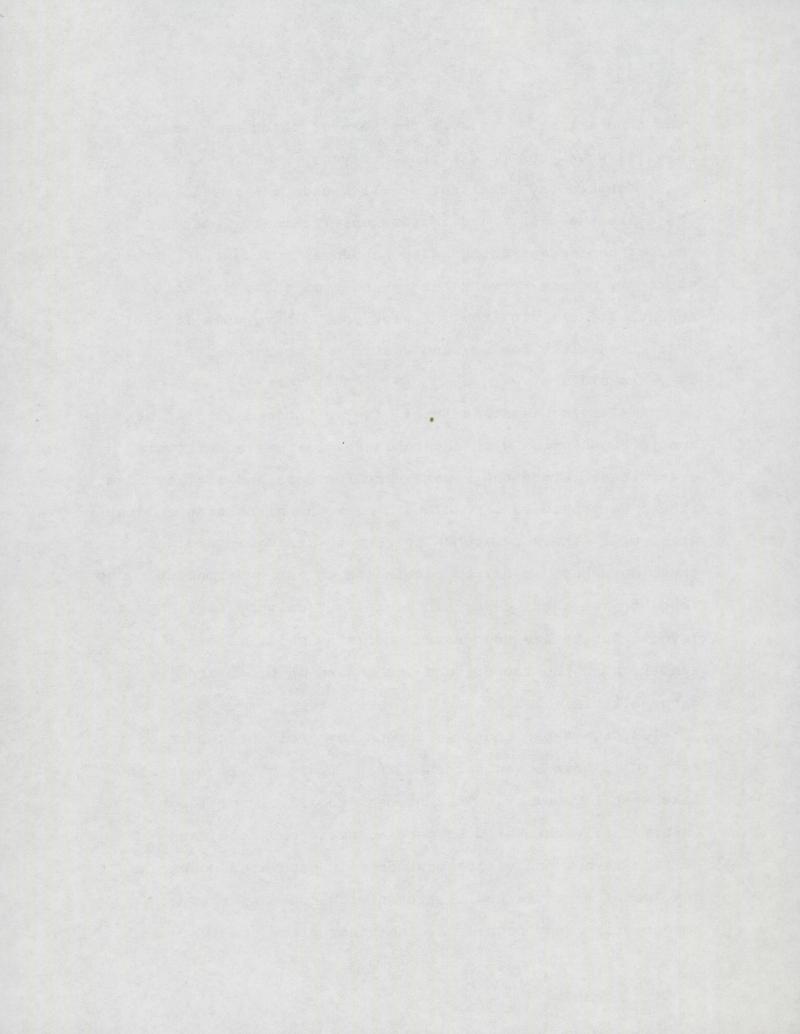
I should say here that it all sounds too idyllic, but these are the events and impressions I remember best. Of course unpleasant things also happened; but I would have to search my memory--- very hard--- to find them; and to be honest, I don't want to. I want you to have some idea of what it was like for me; and what I remember now, that I am 62 years old.

Amsterdam was not a large city in those days, it was spacious and green with an abundance of trees and flowers everywhere. Since there were very few cars and little noise, it was very peaceful. One could hear the birds sing and the wind howl: the very sounds we seem to miss more and more, these days because of too much noise in our environment. One tends to remembers a certain place, not only by it's physical layout, but by its sounds and smells as well. The smells of summer, when the flowers and trees were in bloom are unforgettable.

Not long ago Papoo and I went back to my old neighborhood in Amsterdam; but I was saddened that it doesn't look at all like what I remember. This happens to all big cities.

Unfortunately the World is getting over populated, and Holland is now one of its most densely populated countries.

The Amstel River is now cluttered with rows and rows of houseboats. Many people have no other place to live. In my



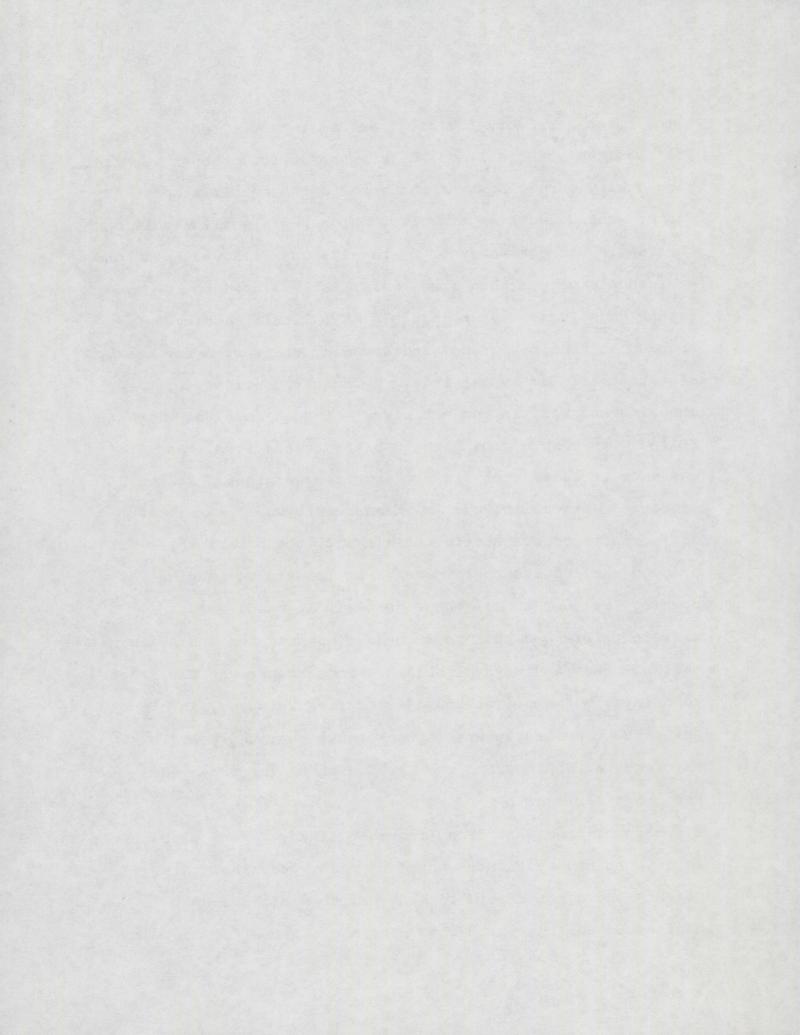
time, there were very few cars, and most people rode bikes. That was the principal mode of transportation, though we also rode trolly cars. Most of the streets had cobble stones. My father went to work on his bike, which had a small saddle on the handle bar for Nanny or me to ride on. I loved being on my father's bike. When I was very little I used to ask my father "can I go on your zageltje? " (little saddle). I pronounced zadeltje wrong, and for many years my error became a sentimental family "saying". My mother conducted both her shopping and visiting on her bike. At rush hour the city was filled with people riding their bikes to and from. And it was safe to leave ones bicycle outside overnight. Most groceries were delivered; most merchants would make their daily visits to our home: the milkman, the baker, the produce man and the poultry man. It is hard to imagine opening the door to all those people! It was a very different life and both so much more complicated and so much easier in so many ways. We had a housekeeper who did a lot to help my mother. The housekeeper lived with us, in a room upstairs. We had several housekeepers over the years. My favorite was Yopie Groen who lived with us for many years until her marriage.

My parents, from what I can remember lived, a very nice life.

As a young man my father wanted to study medicine. His

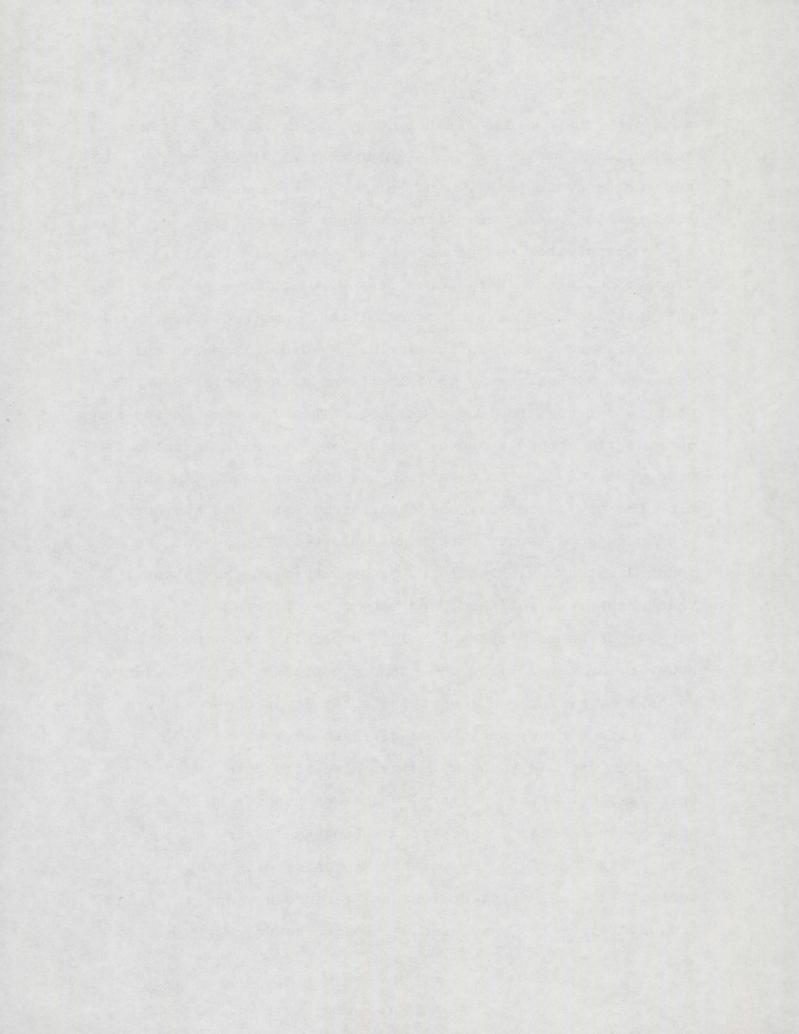
parents could not afford to send him to medical school

because in Holland one had to have a great deal of money to



send a child to medical school. My dad spent all his free time reading medical books, going to the library to read as much as he could on his own. He bought medical books with his savings, but my grandparents wanted him to learn a trade; so my grandfather persuaded him to go into the business -- the diamond business! Many Dutch Jews were in the diamond business, as were both my grandfathers. Amsterdam was the major diamond center in the world. My dad learned to cut diamonds; was extremely good at it and soon specialized in what is called girdeling, (snijer). This involves making the outside rim around a stone. After many years of learning the trade, he was able to establish his own business. He opened his factory, with only one other assistant. The business soon grew much larger with many employees. He bought the rough diamonds which would be manufactured in the factory: that meant cut, polished, and many other processes. Afterwards he sold the whole lot, hopefully, at a profit. However, he never liked the diamond business, and he refused to tell my sister and I anything about it in order to be sure that neither of us would ever get into it.

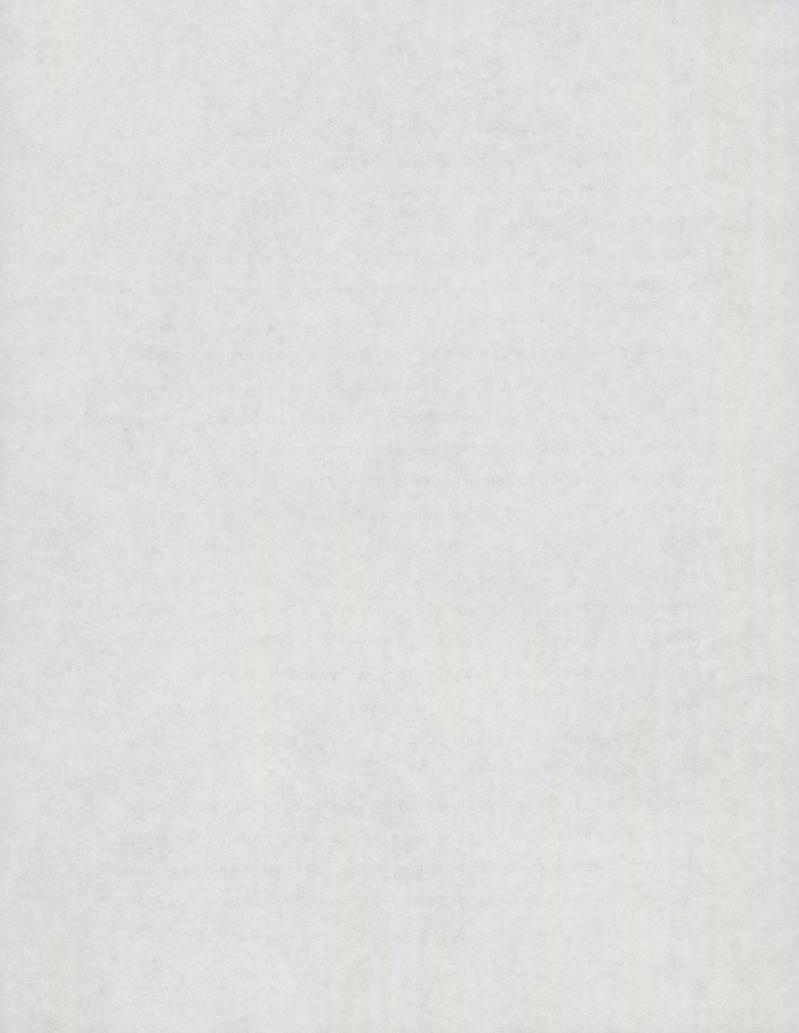
When she was young my mother also worked in the diamond business, but after she married she was happier as a home maker. Later in her life, she became a very accomplished artist. My parents kept busy with many activities: all sorts of lessons, languages, tennis, bridge and water sports. They also were eager to travel. They took



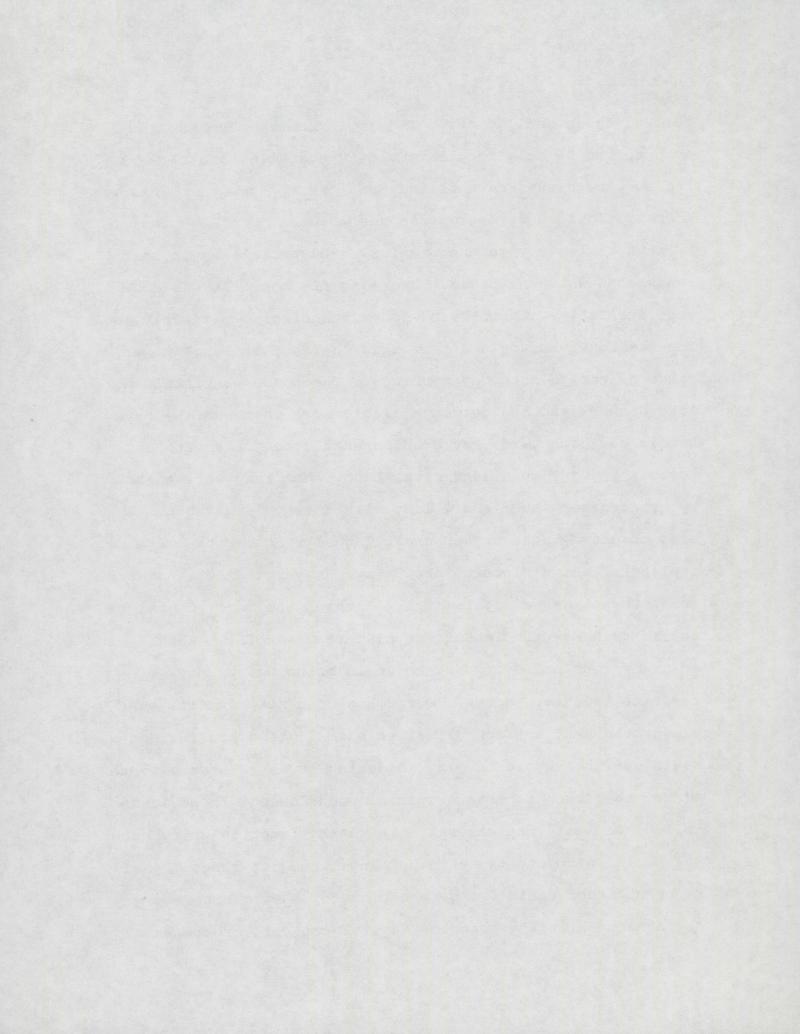
a cruise on the maiden voyage of the very large Dutch Ocean Liner the "Oranje". Nanny and I stayed with our grandparents when my parents traveled, and sleeping in my grandparents bed was a special treat.

We had a boat called a werry. It was a large, polished wooden row- boat complete with wicker built-in chairs which we used mainly on weekends. We would all dress in white, take a picnic, and spend the day leaving Amsterdam on one of its many waterways. The climate in Holland is not like California; and a warm summer day is both so- special and so pleasurable that everyone cannot wait to get outdoors. When we had such a nice weekend, our first wish was to be on the water. Our boat was housed not far from where we lived, and we would start out early in the morning and make a full day of it. We would meet friends in their boats and lunch together somewhere in the middle of the river, or find a special quite spot where we could relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery. I usually took a friend along. When it was warm you could jump in the water and swim. Then the water was clean and clear, but I wonder if it is still clean enough, today to swim in.

We also had a summer cottage on the outskirts of Amsterdam. It was on a piece of land with a small gardeners' cottage on it. This was <u>our</u> country place. The cottage contained some lawn chairs and gardening tools. I never knew if my parents rented this "garden" or owned it. There was a whole park

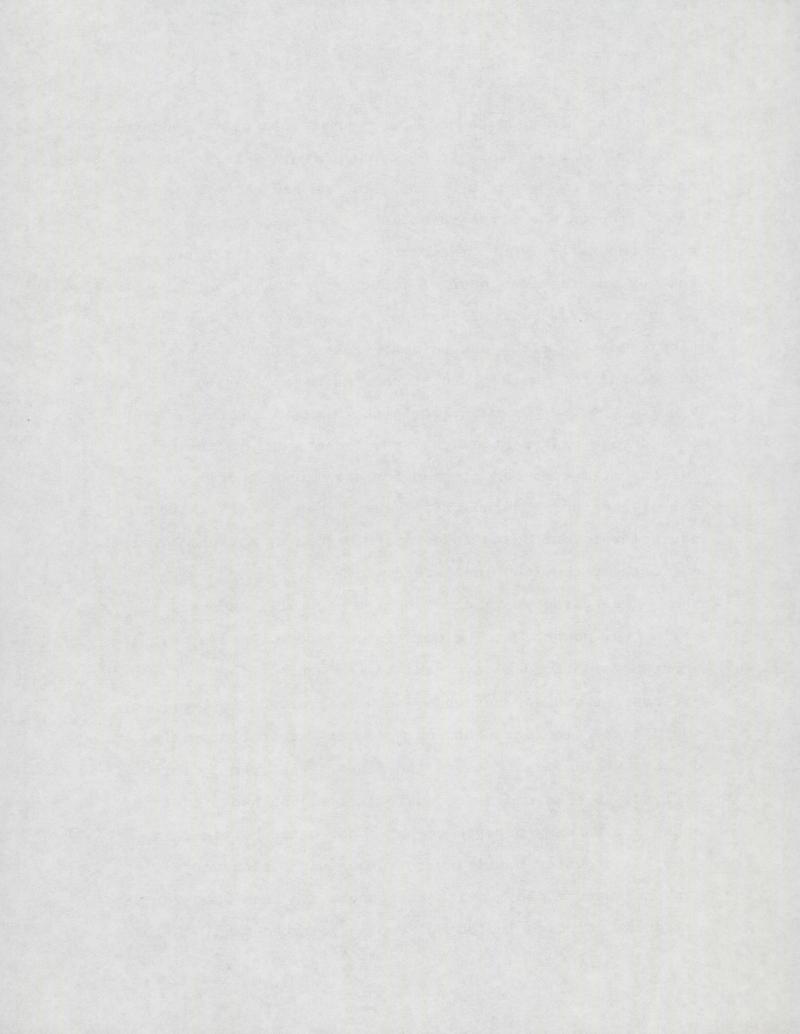


full of these small plots. I just loved it; because I was so happy to be able to plant my own vegetables and flowers. I grew watercress, carrots and some pretty flowers. This was another picnic spot. You can see we were "big" on picnics. My father always made the picnics. He specialized in thin sandwiches which he packed in a long tin box. It was done very precisely with the sandwiches standing up perfectly in the tin box. He would often bring the food at lunch time since he worked Saturday mornings. The house was little more like a shack and the garden a little more than what we have now in our back yard. My grandparents often came with us. I loved them very much, and I was happy when they were there. My grandmother was a small lady with a very large bust. used to put my head on her chest, and I remember the warm feeling of being close to her. She was very sweet and sang to me when I was a little girl. I think she made up most of the songs. My grandfather was also very special. When I was in grammar school every day he would bring me my very favorite treat at recess. Our school did not have its own playground, but the school was on a small town square; and we would use the square to play in during recess. In the month of May they used to make a special young cheese in Holland called Mei kaas (May cheese). It was my favorite everything! It is all white and tastes something like goat cheese. Well, my grandfather would bring me a piece of that cheese every day at recess in the month of May. I can still remember

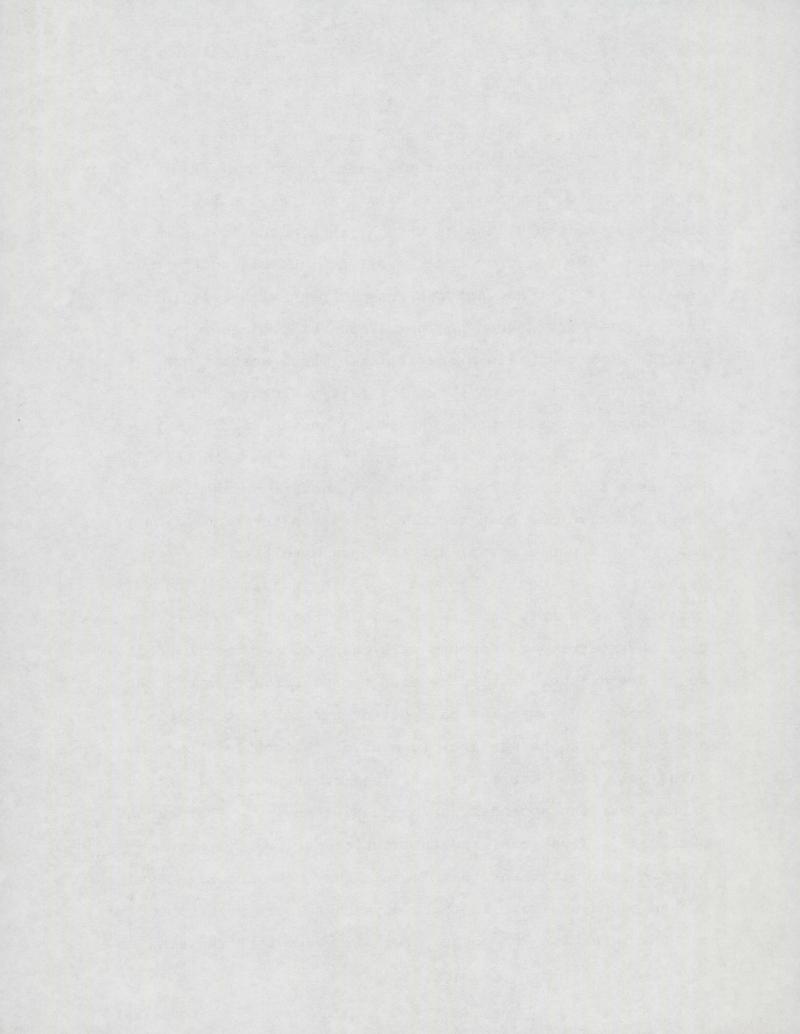


looking for him as soon as I came outside to play. Not long ago I talked about this to my cousin Rita. Rita is the daughter of my mother's brother Ab. We are close friends; and, although she lives in Holland, we manage to see each other regularly. Our grandfather did the same for her when she was in grammar school. I forgot to ask her what he would bring to her. (Well, I just had a chance to ask her, because they came to visit.) She said he brought her "Mei kaas" too. Our grandfather worked, but found the time to bring us these special treats. He was also in the diamond business. On Saturday he transported my sister and myself, to the many lessons my mother had planned for us. Amongst them were our ballet lessons. One beautiful summer day my grandpa could not tolerate our being indoors and begged my mother to let us go to the park with him instead.

When I was three years old I became very ill. My parents called the doctor, and he quickly came to our house. In those days doctors always came to the house. They had offices, of course, but when you were sick and in bed, they would come. In fact when your parents were children the doctors would still come to the house. When the doctor arrived, he examined me and said that I just had a stomach ache; and told my parents to put a hot water bottle on my tummy. Hot water bottles were rubber bags, that you filled with hot water, closed with a stopper, and then used for many different purposes including keeping your bed warm. After



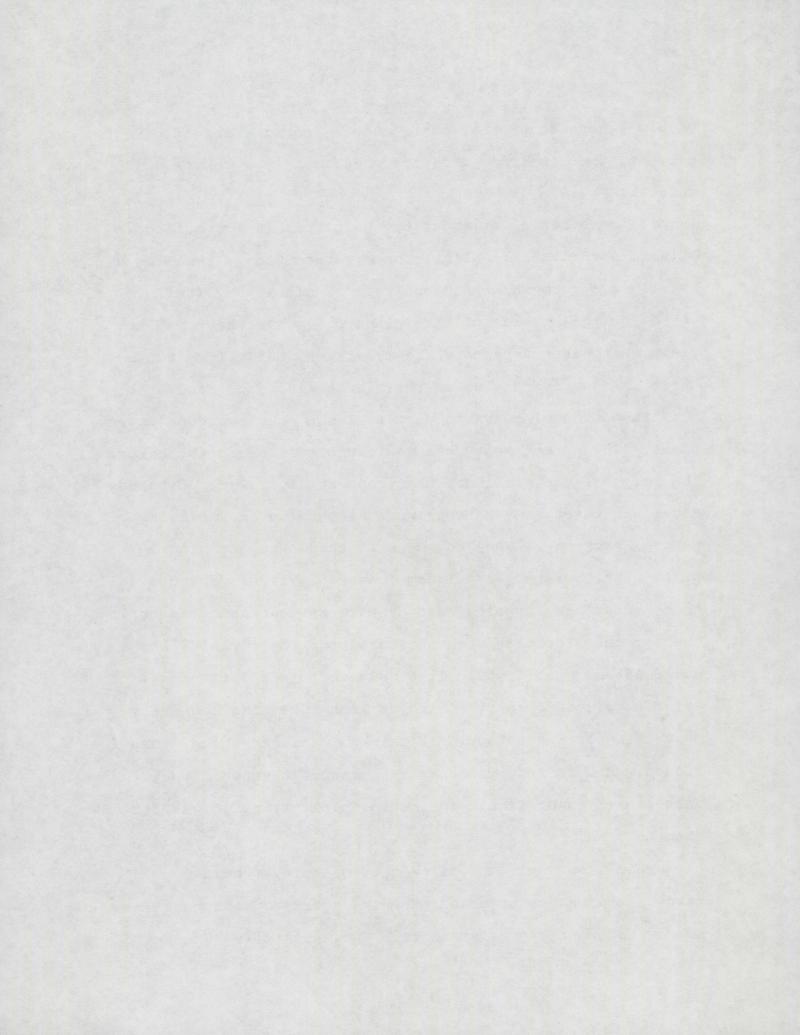
the doctor left I felt worse and worse. My parents told me later, that in the middle of the night my father sat up with me and decided to examine me. After all, he had read all those medical books, and he thought that maybe it was my He found my tummy swollen . He called the doctor appendix. and told him that he wanted a consultation with a pediatric specialist. You needed the permission of the general practitioner to obtain a specialist. There weren't many specialists in those days, so the family doctor did everything. However there was a well know pediatric surgeon whom they called; and after he examined me, he said that I had acute appendicitis and needed an operation immediately. There was also the fear that if I received any kind of bump, the appendix would burst; and that would be extremely dangerous. How could they get me to the hospital? The streets were mostly cobble stones, and they had to carry me down the stairs. My parents were much too nervous to do it, so my grandfather carried me down the stairs and into a cab. The doctor had given the taxi driver careful instructions on how to drive so he would avoid most of the cobble stones by using only paved streets. I arrived at the hospital without a bump, but the appendix ruptured later anyway. That caused serious complications, and the doctors advised my parents that they didn't think that I would survive. For six days, it was touch and go. In those days there were no antibiotics and the infection was potent; for six weeks they isolated me.



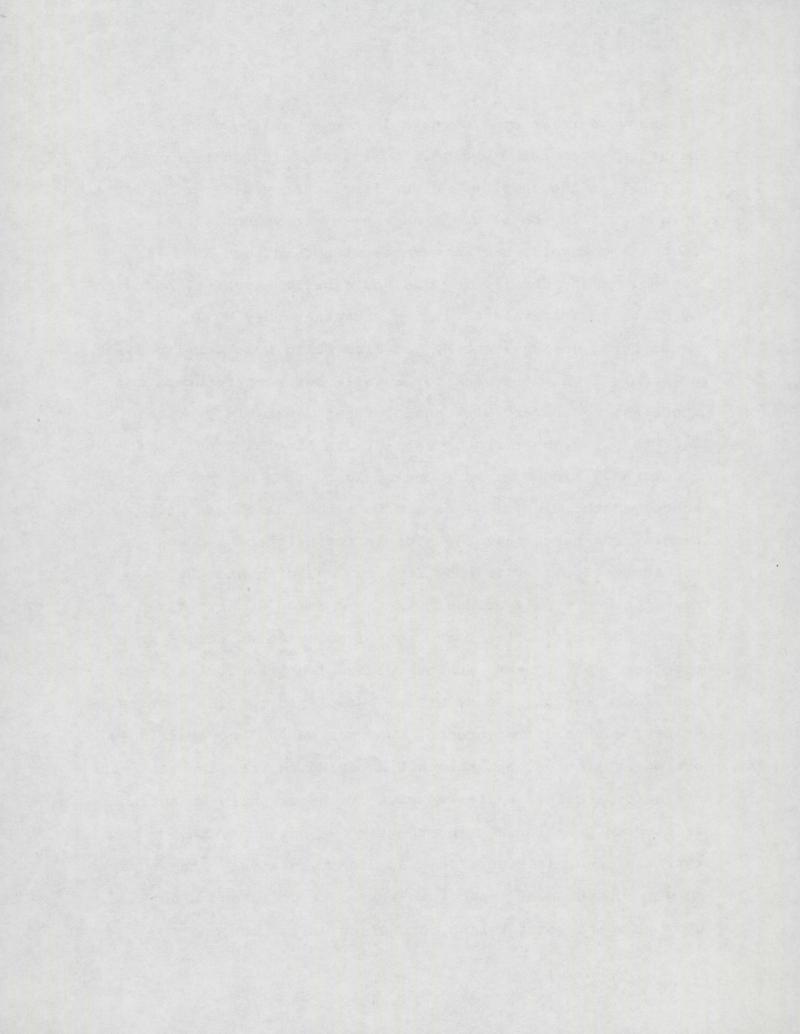
This was done to protect other people from the infected patient, that is from a "dirty" wound. As you can tell I made it!

I still remember a lot about the hospital; it was called Wilhelmina Gasthuis. Wilhelmina was the Queen. I was by myself in a room which had one wall of glass. My family stood on the outside of that glass wall when they came to visit: not just my parents and my sister, but all my aunts, uncle, and everyone else in the big family. My grandfather put his hat on sideways to make me laugh, and everyone waved to me. The nurses kept some medications in a cabinet across the room. I can still see that room as if it were yesterday and I was three. My parents were allowed to see me a few minutes each day. They asked me if there was anything I particularly wanted when I came home. I said I wanted a doll house more than anything, and my parents went home and built one for me. Everyday when they came for their visit they would ask me what I would like to have in the doll house. I tried to please them by coming up with something new every day. Finally I just couldn't think of another thing, then I suddenly had an inspiration---- a vacuum cleaner! wasn't half as difficult for me to think of, as it was for them to find.

When I was well and allowed to go home, I told my parents that since my grandfather had carried me downstairs, he now had to carry me upstairs. They all talked about that



for many years to come. The doll house was the most beautiful doll house you have ever seen. It had bricks and a doorbell on the outside. Floor lamps that would really light up and rugs on the floors, and ----- a vacuum cleaner. It had two levels, and many rooms with furniture. remember every detail. My dad could build anything, and with my Mom's creative consultations, together they build a magnificent doll house. My Dad also build some furniture for my room. I was very weak for a while but soon recuperated, and I was never very sick again. When I was six years old, I went to the grammar school called, Jan Lievens School. Which didn't have kindergarten. One could go to a private nursery school, but I didn't. I walked to school which was only six blocks from home. All the kids in the neighborhood went to the same school; my friends from our building and the one next door were in my class. In the morning we all walked to school together. Often Cora, who lived upstairs, and I went together. Nanny went with the older kids like Cora's brother Edo. Cora was also in my class. We played together before we ever went to first grade. We once made a baby carriages out of shoe boxes, and attached a string to them and took our dolls for a walk. While we were giving our dolls an outing it started to rain; and, by the time we got home, the carriages had disintegrated. We didn't have very many toys, so we made our own. I had some toys like dolls and a doll bed. I spent hours taking care of my dolls; but can't

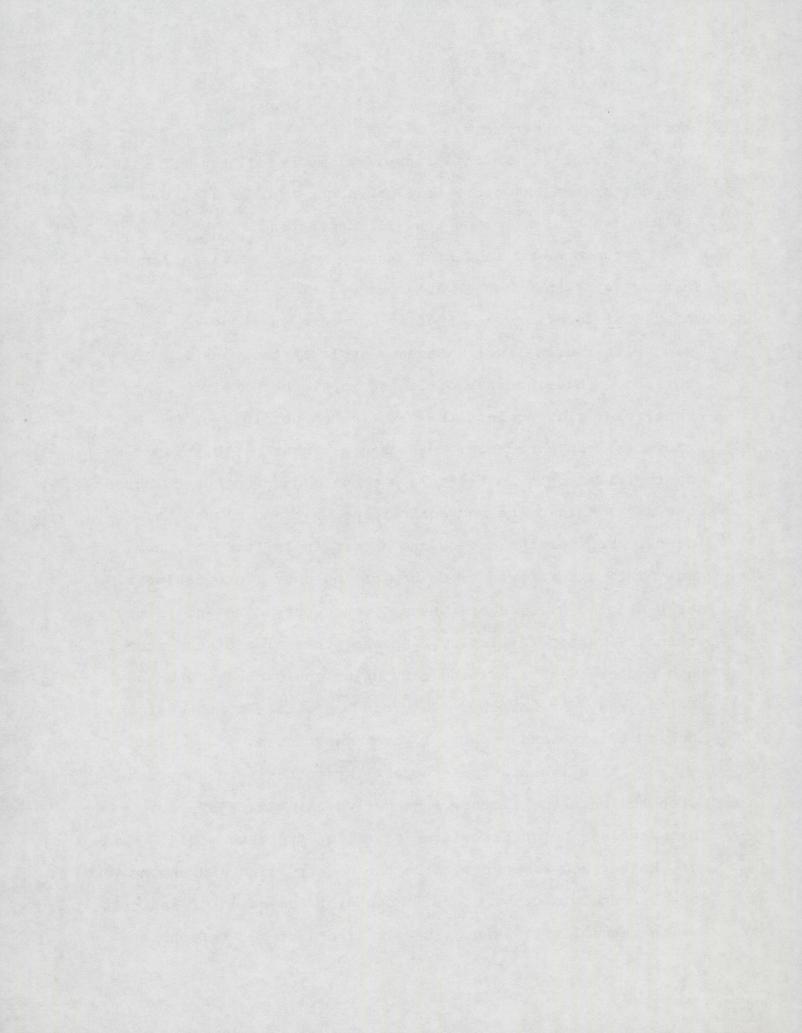


remember any other toys.

By the time I finish this story, all my grand children will be adults; and the story will sound strange, as if I was talking to babies I hope you will understand.

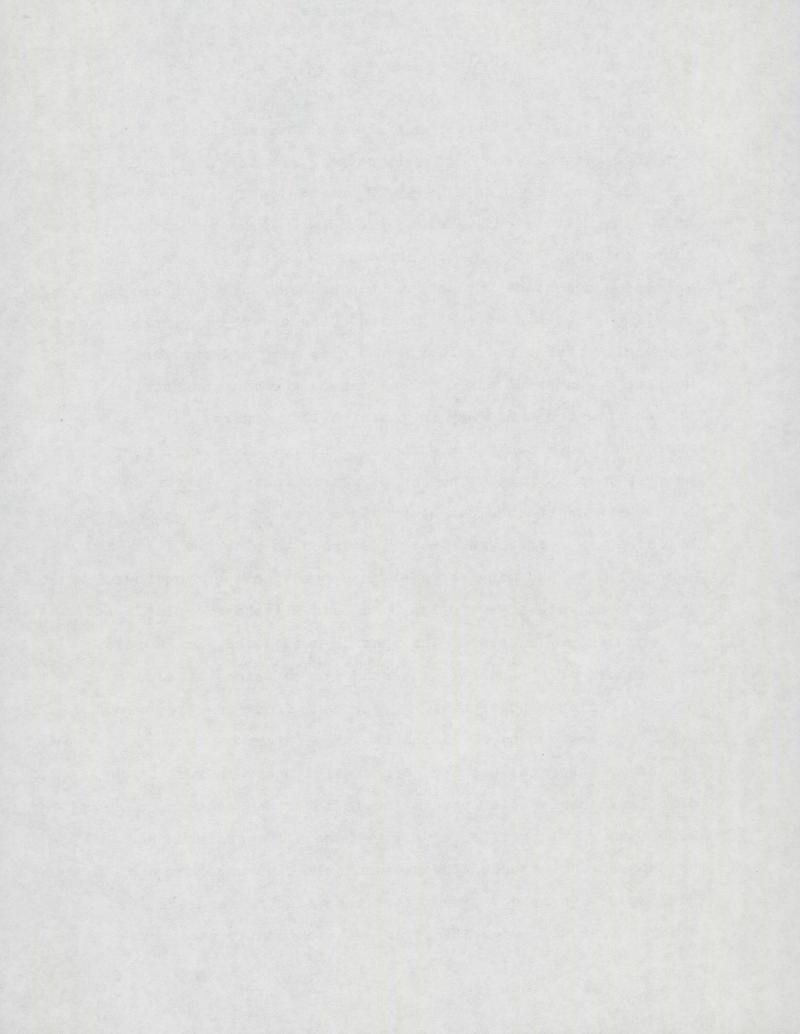
I remember my room at home very well. It was a long narrow room; and when I was about six, I got all new beautiful furniture. All of it was done in light colored wood with modern lines, Bauhaus style in those days. In Holland we had what was called an "opklapbed". It's a bed that folds flat against the wall. When not in use, it provides much more room. Mine had a closet build around it; doors folded open to create a headboard and footboard. During the day I folded the bed against the wall and closed the doors. Most of these beds had a curtain in front of them, but mine was different. On top of the doors were cabinets with sliding glass doors where I could put books and pretty things I wanted to display. On the other side of the room I had a desk, with a writing part which could close, when not being used. At the end of my room was a door to the balcony called the "veranda" where I spent many hours.

We always had a housekeeper. My mother said they came with the marriage license. We called them "meisje", or dienstmeisje which translated "girl" or "servant girl". Most of these young women came from the country side and had never been in the big city before. One girl was named "Zwaantje", which means little swan. She was afraid of our telephone;

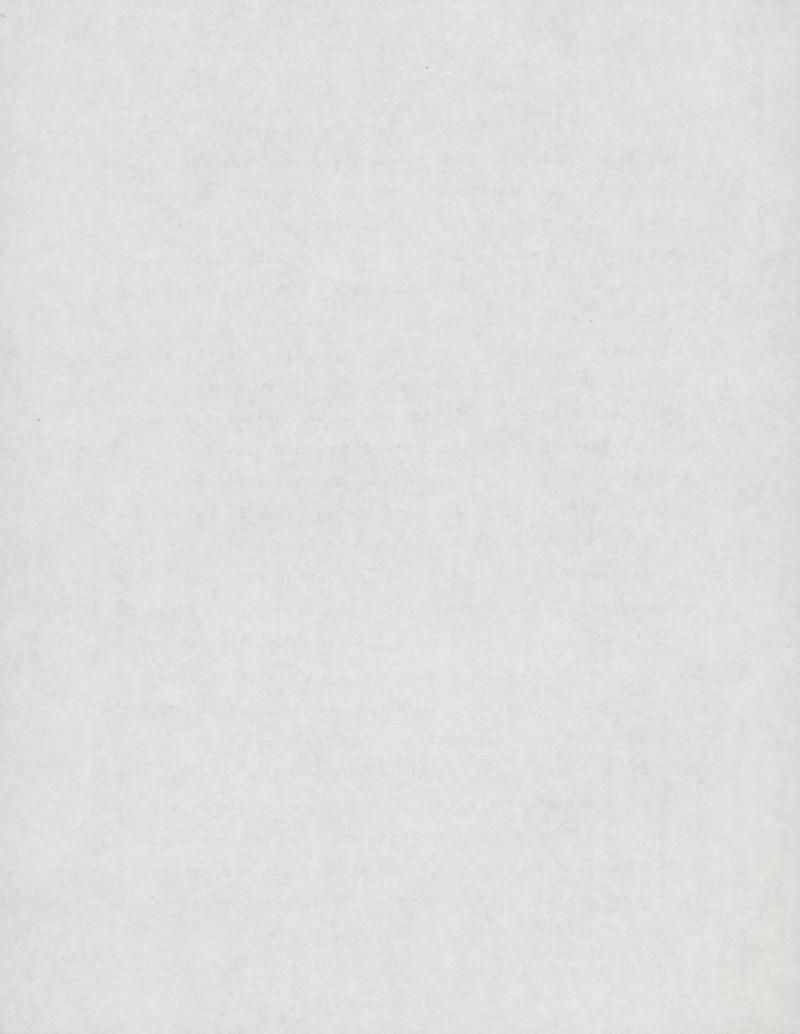


and every time the phone rang, she would stand there and say out loud "it will stop, it will stop". And it did!

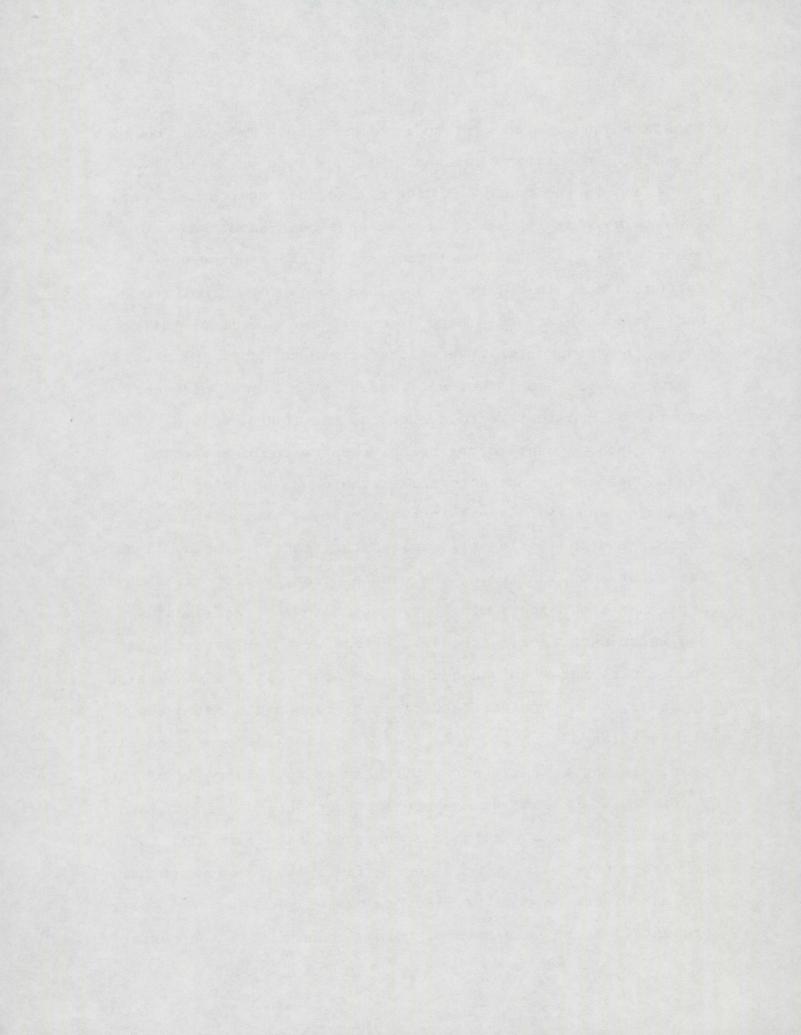
Since people didn't have T.V. or movies they were forced to be inventive ; and we always found some nice project or hobby to occupy us. My father's was photography, soccer and furniture building. My mother enjoyed hand work such as knitting, needlepoint, and drawing. There were many more activities that kept us busy. The kids also had our fun. went to a wonderful music school run by the man who started it who invented a new way to teach children music. It was so much fun, and I could not wait to go there. Usually I went by myself on my bike. The school was in what was known as the Jewish Ghetto and was housed in a very large brick building. My first year there I learned to play the recorder; We had many recorder groups that played together. It was a marvelous way to learn to read, listen and play. We also had theory classes. The special method that Mr. Gerels, the founder of the school, invented was to teach the kids pitch by using hand signals. Every note from" do" "rey" "me" etc. had its own sign. Among the many things we learned, one of my favorites was trying to tell a story in music. We also learned how to transform music into hand signals, a kind of musical braille. Every weekend all my friends and neighbors, who attended the same school, came together and formed our own band. It was thrilling, and we were sure we sounded fantastic when all of us managed to play together.



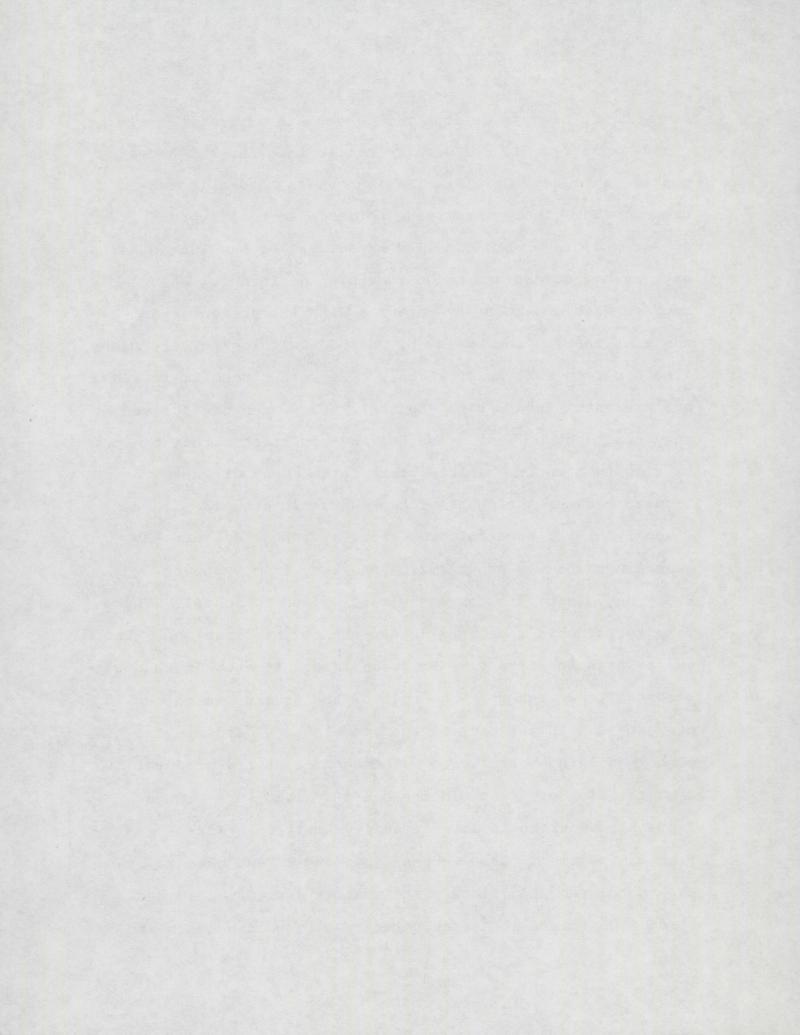
In Holland with all its water, it is necessary to swim in order to survive. At five I was considered retarded in just learning to swim. My mother would take me to my swimming lessons; and, after my lesson, she would supervise my practice. Afterwards she would reward me with a favorite pastry at the bakery, if I could swim 10 or more strokes by myself. As a result, I became a good swimmer rather quickly. My parents had friends called Duits who lived in the country, in a small town not far from Amsterdam. They owned a magnificent estate there; The man was a business partner of my Dad. The Mom was a very nice lady, they had two daughters. I always looked forward to the weekends we visited them. I still have some movies taken on the estate, the center of which was a grand old country house, similar to what you see in France, situated on considerable land with spacious lawns, and even a lake with lots of noisy ducks in There were also many other animals like chickens and qoats. The inside of the house was furnished with lovely antiques and other art. The family had traveled all over the world and were avid collectors. In the movie that I have, you can see us all enjoying the estate. Often we would vacation there while the family went abroad. We ate outside in the garden and enjoyed the warm sun. I learned to ride a bike there when I was about six years old; it was not easy since the only way I could stop was by letting myself fall on the grass.



My sister and I also went to a summer camp. The camp was on the Ocean in Northern Holland. We took long walks in the woods and on the beach; I didn't like this camp at all, and I was also very homesick. I must have been about seven or eight years old when I went there. All the campers were forced to stay in a line when we had to go to the bathroom, and the counselor would hand us one or two pieces of toilet paper depending on what we stated we had to "do". Of course I always said number two, so I would get a bigger piece of paper. We had to take cold showers, the food was awful accept when we went to the beach; then we could eat tasty sandwiches and drink buttermilk. There was one nice counselor who would sneak into the room my sister and I shared, and she would tell stories that made us laugh. I am sure that she didn't like the camp's crazy strict rules any more than the campers did. We went there for two summers, two weeks each time. School vacations were very short, just four weeks; but when you got to High School it was six weeks. My family didn't celebrate Christmas, but we did celebrate St. Nickolas day on December 5, a day I looked forward to all year. It was better than my birthday or any other day of the year. "Sinterklaas" was a very important holiday in Holland. We would make or buy gifts for everyone, and every gift had to have a poem with it. The whole family would get together, and one by one each of us read his or her poem and open their presents. There were special things to eat: like the letter

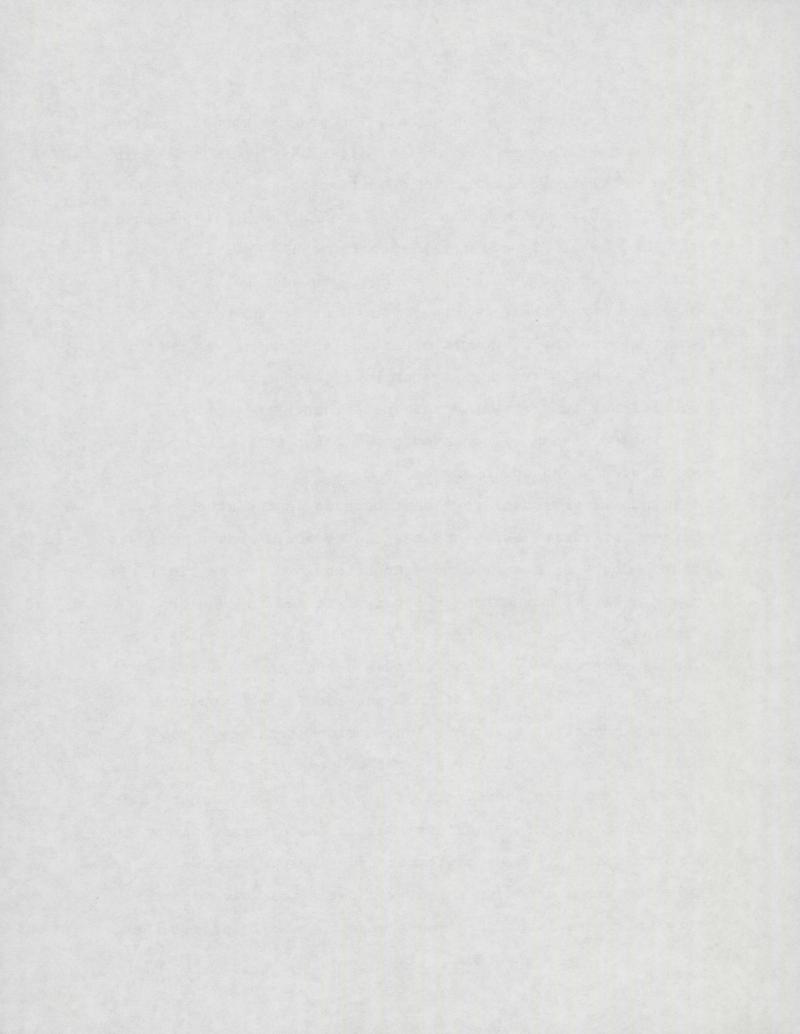


of my first name, made from rich chocolate or fragrant almond -filled pastry, but I always regretted that the "J" had such a small surface. My sister Marianne's "M" had twice the amount. Then there were "pepernoten" a sort of round spicy cookie and ginger bread called speculaas. On one St. Nikolas day, my mother decided to do something different. She stuffed an old suit of my father's with the presents; and by the time she finished with it, she had what looked very much like a person sitting on a chair. We were forced to retrieve our presents through his "stomach". When everyone arrived they could not believe my mother had constructed this big man sitting in a chair. Thirty years later, many of these figures became highlights of her fantastic artwork. I don't think I have told you about my school as yet. My grammar school was about six blocks away from my house. Every day, rain, snow or sunshine I walked to school. There were two schools side by side; I went to the first one. was a large, unattractive brick building situated in what was a sort of town square. The rest of the square became our playground. In the back of the school was a garden. school building was covered with magnificent ivy all over it. Come to think of it so did the house I lived in. impressive looking to live in an ivy- covered brickfronted apartment house. When Papoo and I went back to see the school recently, it was sad that it looked so old and tired. The class rooms had three rows of wooden desks and



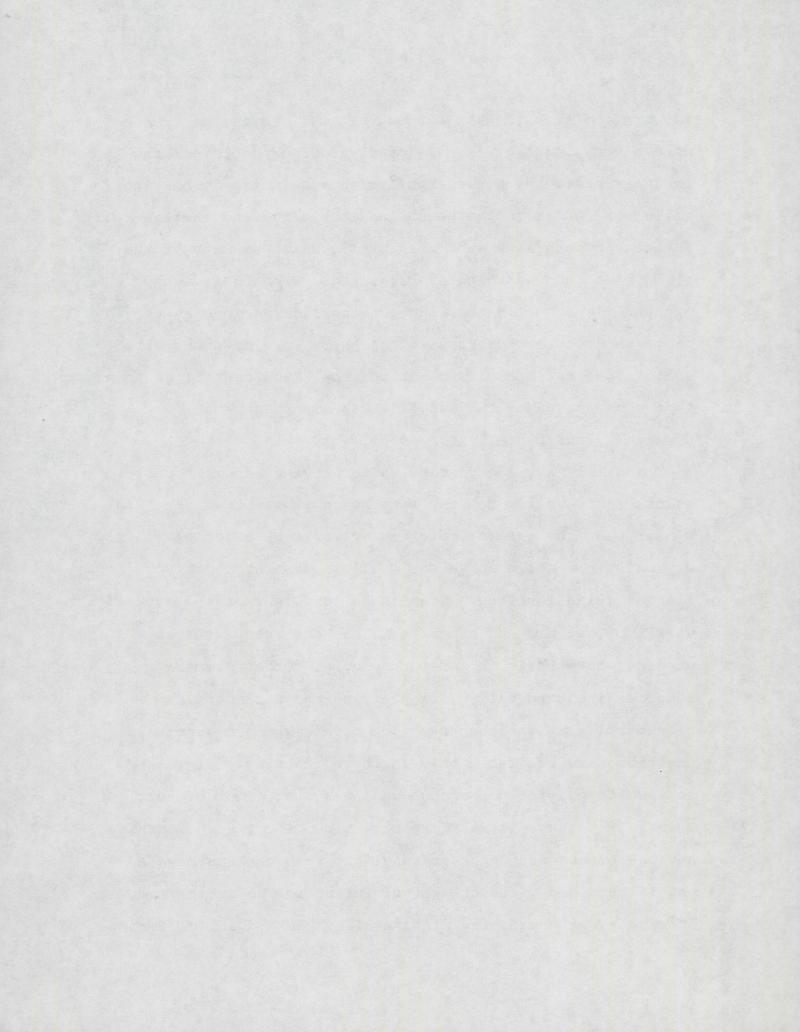
very large windows on one side. The grammar school consisted of the first through six grades, after that you went to high school. There were a number of different high schools one could go to: the Gymnasium, the Leceum, the H.B.S., Mulo and the Ulo. What did all those schools mean? Well if you were brilliant according to your teacher you went to the first one: and, from there on down, you were sent to the school which the teachers thought a particular student was capable of. It was a horrendous system because your whole educational future, was determined at such an early age. I understand it has all changed now. Later on I will tell you why I didn't end up in any of them.

I liked winter school days best because in the afternoon it became dark quite early and the lights would come on; it was cozy. "Cozy" is a very important Dutch word, "Gezellig". It means a little more than just cozy. It has to do with feeling nice, warm, fun--- and pulling up your shoulders as you say it! Anyway it was nice in school in the winter. Because there was a lot of snow outside I often would be wearing boots. I also wore long woolen stockings a wool coat, hat, scarf and gloves. The winters lasted a long time, and the days were short. It didn't start to get light till eight in the morning; and, by four in the afternoon it would be dark again. The opposite was true in summer. Just being able to wear a dress to school without a coat gave summer a very unique feeling. Then there were the smells of all the



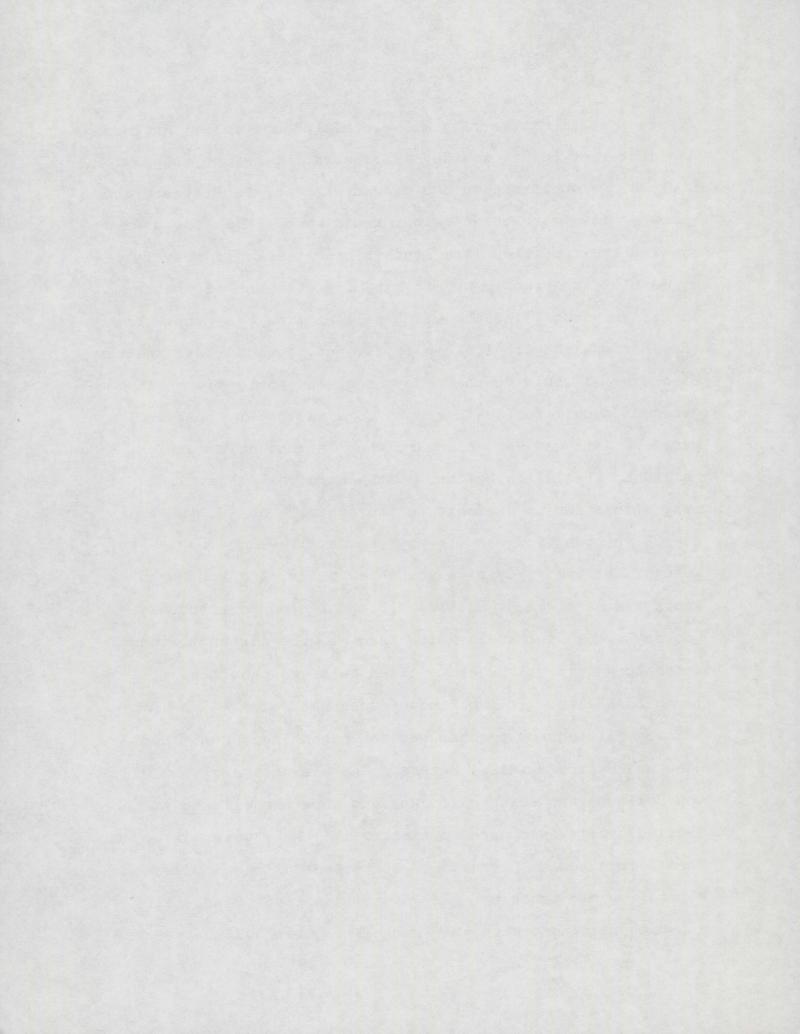
flowers and trees. When the sun hit the leaves the trees were a very light green. I loved watching people gliding by in their boats on the water or friends swimming or playing in the river, going to the beach, and building sand castles—all in the warmth of the sun! Because it rains so much of the time in Holland sunshine is treasured. When it is sunny everyone is so delighted, and gets outside as soon as they can. When I went to grade school there were days the city would close the school and let us know "you can all go home; it's a day to enjoy the sun." It was important both physically and mentally for us all.

I still have a hard time, after living in California for almost forty years, to stay indoors on a beautiful day. In winter when the canals froze, they would also declare a free day once in a while so we could all go skating. Can you imagine doing that now? Even in Holland most of the mothers work; so they are not expected to be home when, without warning, have their children come home. Other summer memories included eating strawberries and picking blackberries in the country. Ice cream, white peaches and cherries were available only in the summertime. I looked forward to playing hop scotch on the street after dinner. Primarily because it was a special time of day to be outside. Because of the many hours of daylight the evenings have a magnificent glow. School was different in the summer too. At recess, we would play with marbles. We had all different



kinds of glass marbles; some were all of one color, and some had different colors inside. At recess, or before school started, we would sit on the ground with our legs spread and a row of five marbles where our knees were. Kids would walk by with their marbles in a leather pouch; and, if they liked my marbles, they would try to hit mine with one of theirs. It was very much like a bowling ball hitting the pins. they hit one they could keep it; if not, I would take theirs. Of course, I could do the same thing. We would sit on the ground and call for customers. "Come and get my beautiful marbles." It was very close to what is done at a carnival called a "kermis" in Holland. At a carnival, there lines of many stands set up one next to the other. You walk by and see which stand you want to try your skill--- and luck --- at. Most of the time they give you three balls, and you have knock over a stack of bottles. Depending on your success, you may win a stuffed animal. When we were fortunate enough to go to a carnival, what we liked best was the food. I loved olibollen. It's a kind of doughnut.

My first grade teacher was an enchanting woman. Her name was Juffrouw (Miss) Peters. She was not married. Can you believe that teachers in Holland were not allowed to be married? It's even hard to imagine it! Many years later, when I returned to Amsterdam, I visited Juffrouw (Miss) Peters, my old teacher. She was still a lovely lady, tall and elegant, and looked very much like Queen Juliana. She



was very sweet and soft spoken, and I was lucky that she was my first teacher. It gave me a happy start in school. first day of school I cried practically the whole day, and Miss Peters gave me a towel to wipe away my tears. Since the hospital stay, I had never been away from home, and I sure didn't like it. However once I got used to it, I thoroughly enjoyed school and looked forward to going there every day. Of course there were some classes I liked better than others. We had an hour of calisthenics every day; and, even though I wasn't very good at it, I found it to be a lot of fun. By not very good I mean I wasn't that great at climbing poles, swinging on ropes, and jumping over tall fences. The Dutch kids were very athletic, and the school stressed sports a great deal. I was much more adept at swimming, sailing, and (my very favorite sport) ice skating; but those were limited to after school and on weekends. Ice skating was really a passion of mine. My friends and I would go to the figure skating rink; and I found it impossible to just walk the last half block to the rink. had to run. I wore white high shoes with skates attached along with wooden protectors on the skates. The Dutch people who skated on the frozen rivers wore somewhat different skates. In the old Dutch paintings you can see those skates. They looked like a long narrow wooden platform which curls up at the end with a blade --- attached. All you have to do is tie them to your shoes and away you go. However, mine were

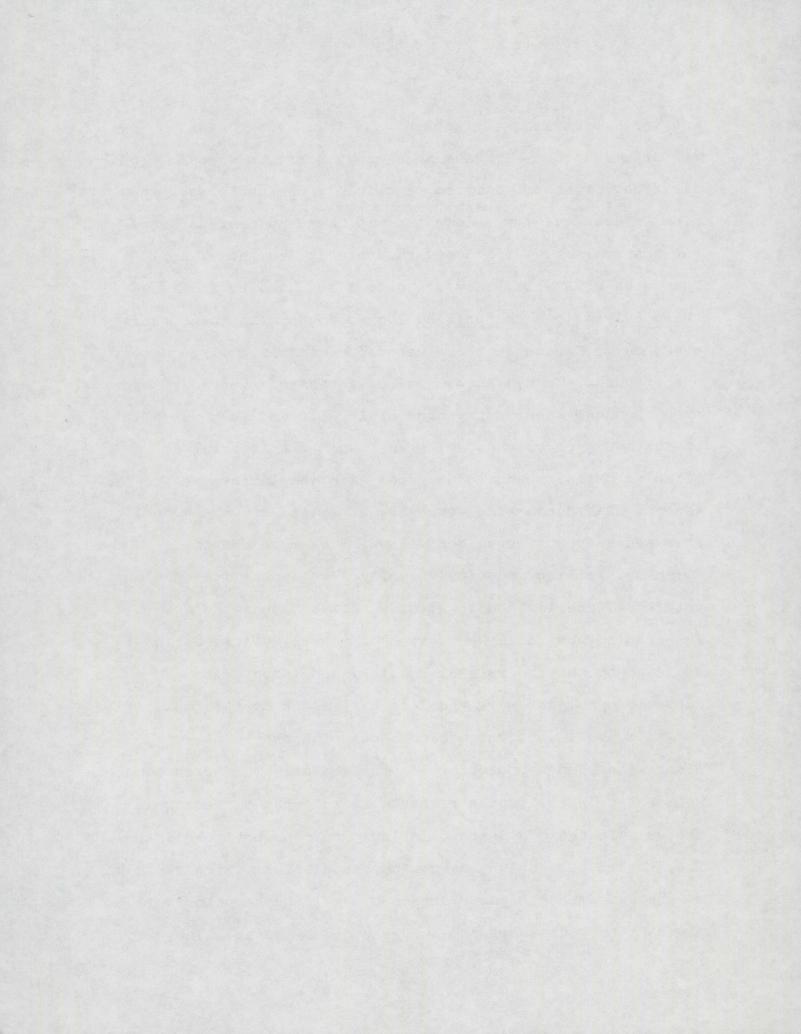
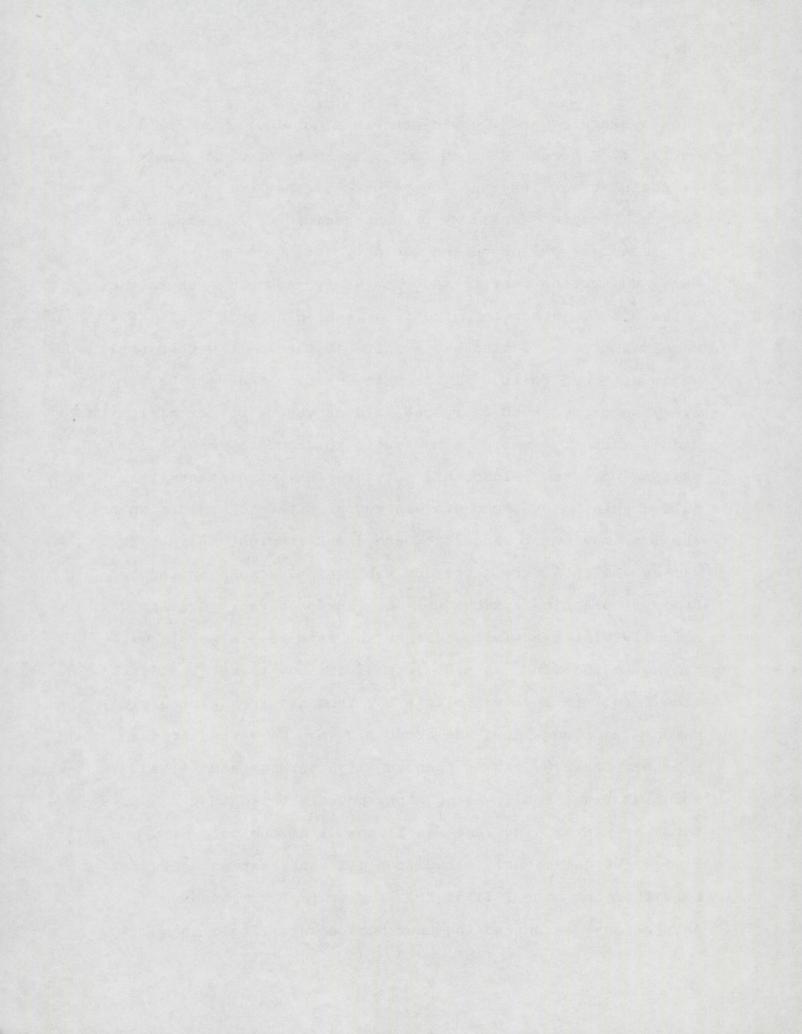
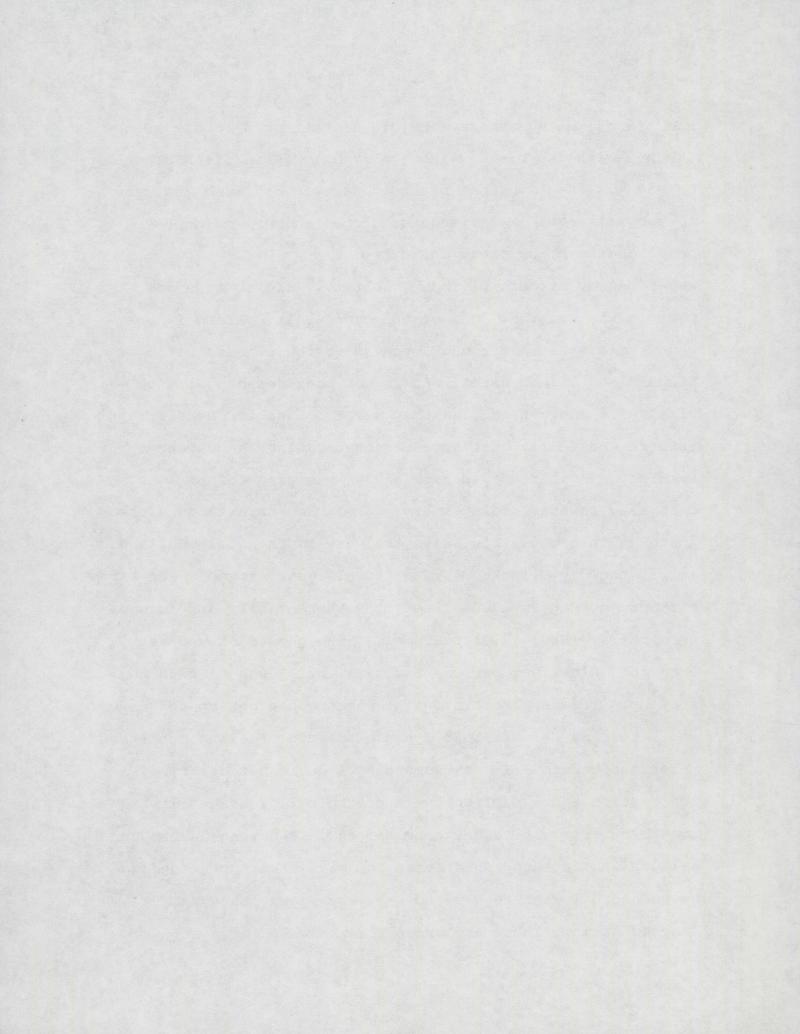


figure skates; and I could dance and do figures on the ice on them. I became so good at it, that the Olympic committee at the skating rink asked my parents if they could train me for the Olympic games. My parents decided that I should have a more normal childhood and wouldn't let me do it. Mama had skating outfits made for Nanny and me. A short wide skirt with a jacket to match in a light blue soft wool. were beautiful. I also had a white leather belt with a small purse attached to it. I liked ice dancing the very best. Everyone danced with every one, old or young, boy or girl, it didn't matter. We always had music to dance to, mainly ice skating waltzes. Along this outdoor rink, were stands that sold snacks. Hot chocolate was my favorite. I would stop on the ice, buy a hot chocolate, and drink it right there. It was served in a very large cup with whipped cream on top. Paper or plastic cups had not been invented yet. Skating was a family winter activity. Since the same people were always coming to the rink, we made lots of friends there. The first time I fell in love was with a boy from the ice skating club, which I joined when I was about eleven. We walked home together after we had ice danced all afternoon and talked about skating; and I was so happy and flattered that he would carry my skates. My face was flushed from the cold air, and I would be deliciously tired from all that skating. After I told them how much I liked this boy my family teased me, not only because we danced together but because I told them he



had brains; he was smart. My grandfather used to ask me how the boy with the brains was. In 1940 I was in fifth grade. On May 4, I had my usual birthday party, very much the same as you all have. My friends came over and we would play games and have ice cream and cake.

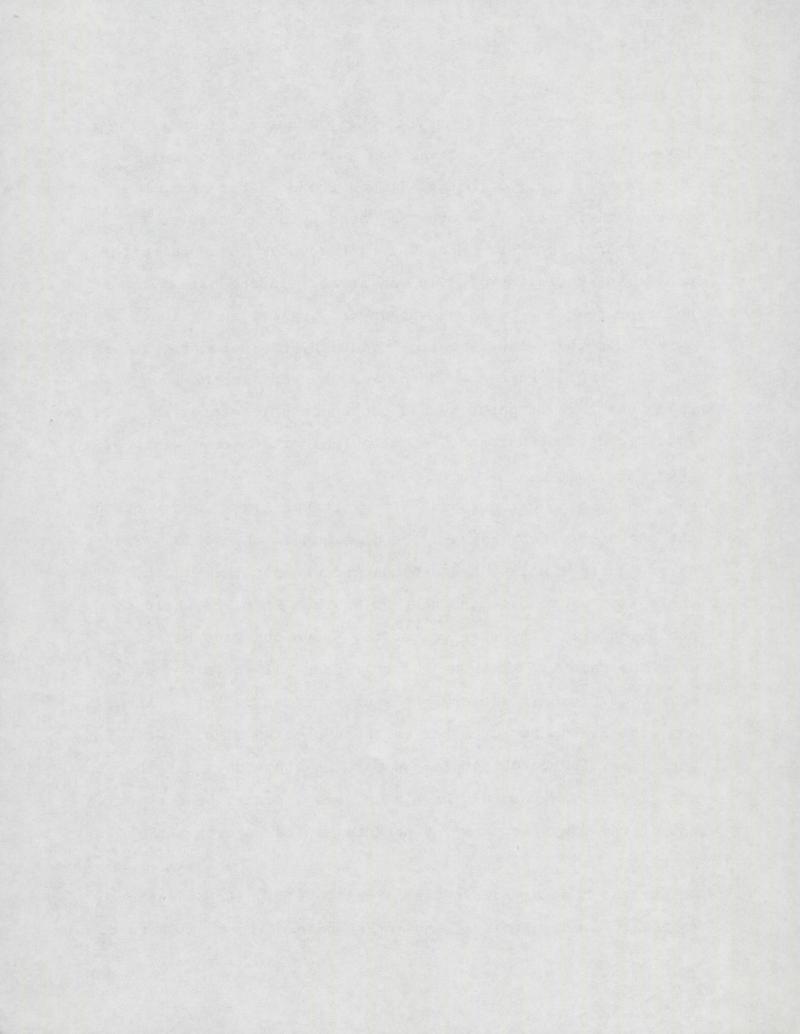
May 9 was my mothers birthday, so family and friends came over in the evening. One of the customs in Holland is that when someone has a birthday, you go to their house with flowers and or a present. It is not considered polite to visit with empty hands, as they say. No one is invited; your friends and family just appear either during the day or the evening. The birthday person always has good things like pastries, cakes chocolates etc. to eat and drink around the house on that day. Birthdays are very important in Holland. It was the day I looked forward to all year around. For her birthday on May 9, 1940 all of my mothers family and friends were there. She was 37 years old. The guests stayed very late that night way past my bed time, but I was allowed to stay up. It was almost midnight when people got up to leave; and I told my parents that I had a dreadful feeling one I had never had before. It was something I could not describe, a sad feeling and a difficulty in breathing. I said "like something terrible is going to happen". Everyone laughed and said it was because I had eaten too much cake and needed to go to bed. I went to bed and was very angry they had laughed at me. There are grown ups who will laugh at



something a child feels very strongly about and I sure didn't like it. Three hours later I was awakened by loud noises outside. At first I thought it was thunder, but somehow it sounded different. I propped my head up on my hand so I could hear it better. What was that sound? I jumped out of bed. The rest of our family was already in the hallway. A neighbor rang the bell; he was in his pyjamas and told us the awful news that we were being invaded by the Germans. It was May 10, 1940. Papa opened the safe he kept in the house and read the piece of paper he had put there a long time ago. It read "In case of war, do the following." It started with BE CALM.

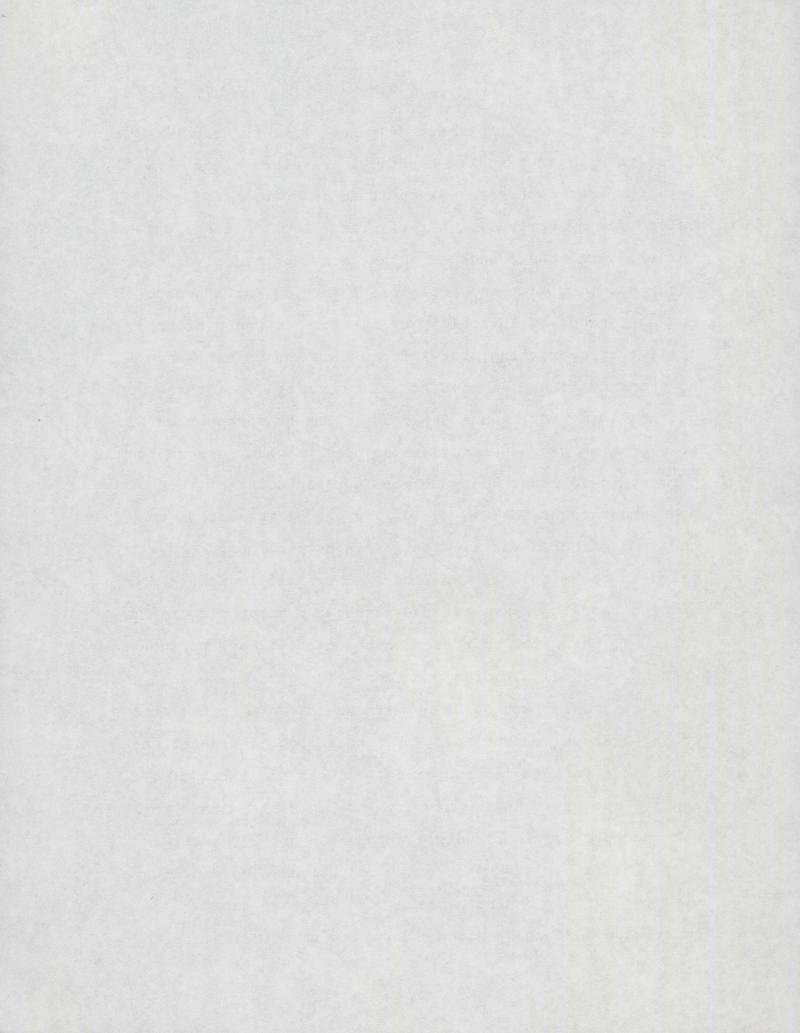
Mama told me to get dressed. It was three A.M. Papa went to the factory to retrieve all the diamonds in the tools. That takes quite a while, because the workmen put them in the tools with diamond cement that holds them in place while they are being cut. In order to get the stone out Papa had to warm the cement. After he had collected all the diamonds and some cash from his factory, he went to a car dealer he knew and woke him up to buy a car on the spot. We didn't own a car. Very few Dutch people had cars in those days and that included us. My Dad did have a drivers licence, because of one of the many "lessons" my parents had taken over the years.

He arrived home an hour after he had left. While he was gone we packed some suitcases; my mother told me to pack whatever

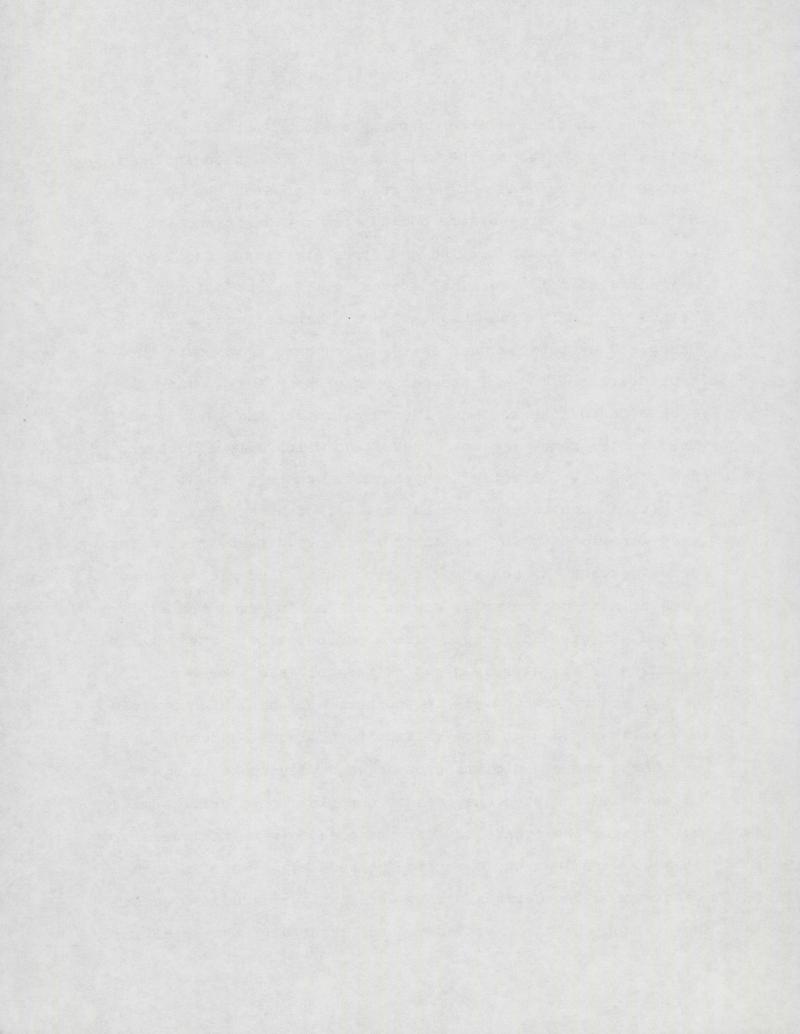


I wanted to take since she didn't have time to help me. The first thing I took was my beautiful new alarm clock. favorite aunt Esther had given it to me just a few days before for my birthday. A real alarm clock! It was yellow enamel, small and round. My other Aunt Ro, had given me my first bottle of lavender cologne. I worried for a second or two wondering, if I should pack it since it would probably spill over everything; but I found I couldn't just leave it, so I opened it and emptied it all over myself. I threw some clothes in my bag, and I was ready. The housekeeper we had at that time was a German -Jewish girl who had escaped from Germany to Holland. Many German Jews had done so since everyone thought Holland would stay out of the war as they had done in World War I. She was in a total panic and sat dazed in the middle of the floor. I can still see her sitting there. My mother had packed two great big trunks full. We threw the suitcases in the car. I have no idea what she packed. It didn't matter. The girl whose name I can't remember refused to go with us and went to her aunt's house. Before we drove off, my father took of his hat, and buried his face in it, and cried. It was the first time I saw my Papa cry. Seeing him cry made me realize that this was indeed a very serious situation. So off we went!

My father was not a very good driver. He did have a licence; but not owning a car he did not have much experience. Since he did not know how to hold the clutch, we

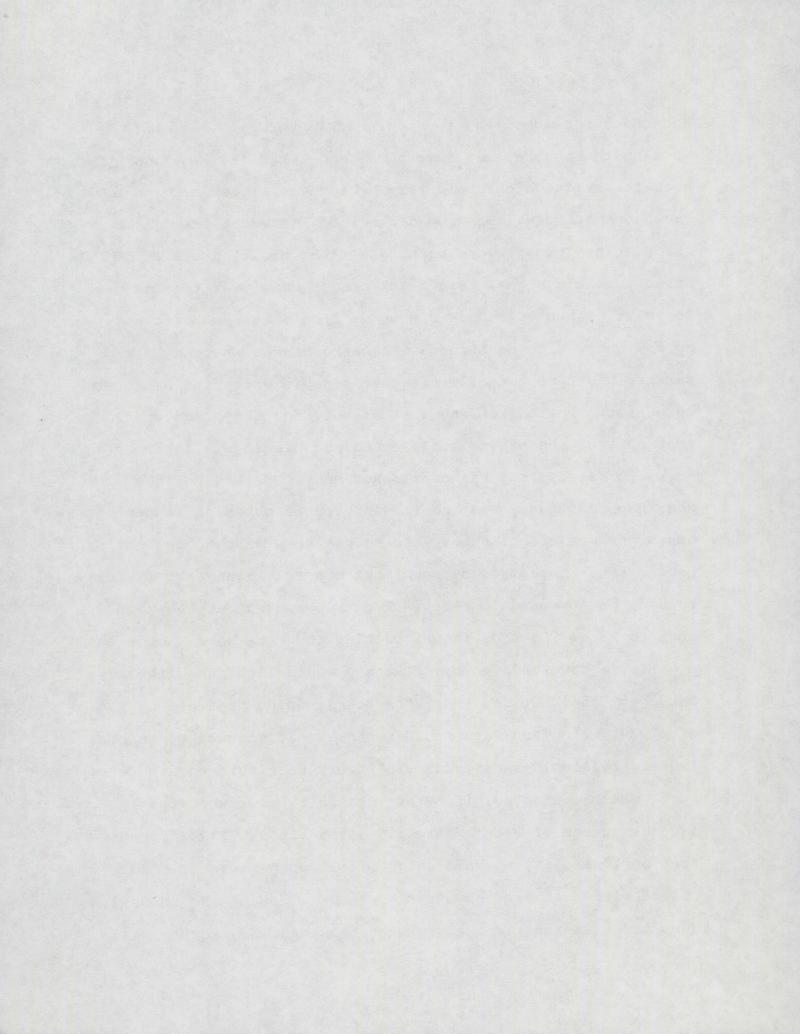


got stuck on bridges when going up a hill; but after a while, he got used to the driving. It was just beginning to become light outside and we were headed towards the South of Holland. The Germans were coming from the North and you could see the bombs falling and fires starting. Shooting and all sorts of noise were all around us. We kept going. Things were whistling overhead, and a minute later a big crash. They told me that these noises came from bombs but we kept driving. We were stopped by the Dutch Army. They looked inside the car and ordered us to say "Scheeveningen". That is the name of a town in Holland which only a Dutchman can pronounce correctly. Anyone else who tries to do so does it with a funny accent; so he made all of us say it, because they were looking for German infiltrators. Every five miles or so we went through the same procedure, and each time we were told to continue. I saw things falling from the sky. My god, it was a parachute with a person on it! Then all of a sudden we saw a whole group of parachutists! We kept going, and by now we were in Southern Holland. Highways did not exist so we went from village to village. Suddenly another group of soldiers stopped us. They spoke to my parents and insisted they needed our big car to drive some soldiers to the front. My parents pleaded with them and told them we were Jews who were fleeing because we were in such danger from the Germans. They were not persuaded, so we had to abandon the car. My Dad had to "chauffeur" the soldiers,



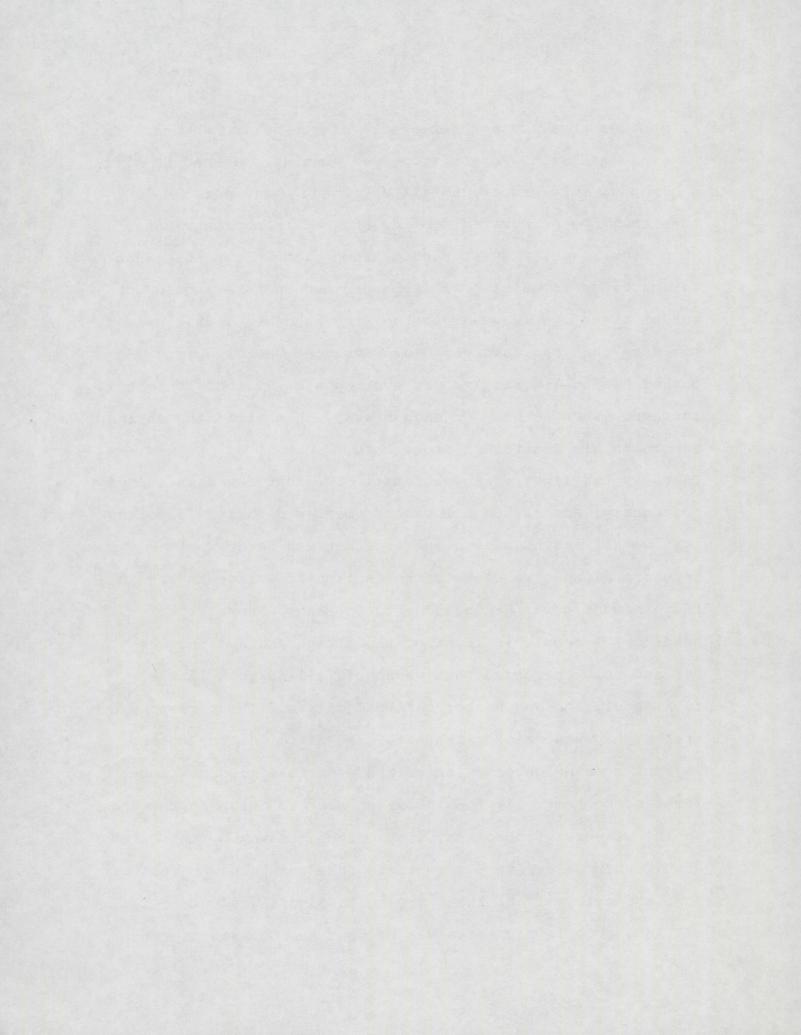
and the three women had to return to Amsterdam.

We rang the doorbell at some house and asked if they knew of a taxi service which could take my mother, sister and myself back to Amsterdam. When we drove into Amsterdam the sky was black. The Germans were burning all the oil refineries. It was a terrible sight. Big black clouds hung over the city for days. When we returned home we didn't know what to do. My mom started to go through the waste basket where my parents had thrown the little envelopes in which the diamonds were kept. The basket was full of them and she discovered that some of the papers still contained diamonds. In their hurry to leave, they had overlooked many. We had no idea what happened to my Dad and it was very frightening at home. Amsterdam was being bombed, and no one knew what to do; not having Papa there made me even more scared. Nanny and I went to bed, but I couldn't sleep. I got up and sat at the window next to Mama. Outside it was raining and very dark. Once in a while, a car would go by. The sky would light up with far away fire. We sat there for hours hoping that one of the cars would stop and Papa would be home. It started to become light very slowly and it was still very difficult to see very much. Mamma asked me, if by any chance I knew what the licence number of Papa's car is. I said it is "77745"; and just as I said it, my Mama said, "look Jenny there is a car coming with that same number." I know it doesn't sound real, does it? Yet that is exactly what happened. My mother was



so shocked that it took her a full minute before she realized what she had said. Papa's story was amazing. He had to drive a group of soldiers around all day long. They were constantly being strafed; (being shot at from planes) and, when night came, they stopped to camp along the road. When things began to quiet down, Papa decided that he should get out of there. He was not in the army, and his family needed him more than the soldiers did. Everyone was sleeping. He pushed his bullet riddled car ever so slowly, foot by foot forward. When he was far enough away, he started the engine turned on his lights and drove home.

That was the first escape attempt. The next few days seemed just crazy; and although I can't remember details, I do know that we all stayed very close together and never went anywhere alone. We went to the English consulate to see if they knew of a way we could go to England. There were hundreds of people in front of the office and someone came out and told the crowd that we should all go to a little fishing village and harbor called Ijmuiden. The person said that a ship was waiting there to take all of us to England. We took some neighbors with us and went to Ijmuiden without first going home. It took about an hour to drive there; and, again, we were stopped many times along the way by the Dutch Army. When we arrived we realized that the town was full of Jewish people, all of them trying to find a way out of Holland. People had some idea of what the Germans did to

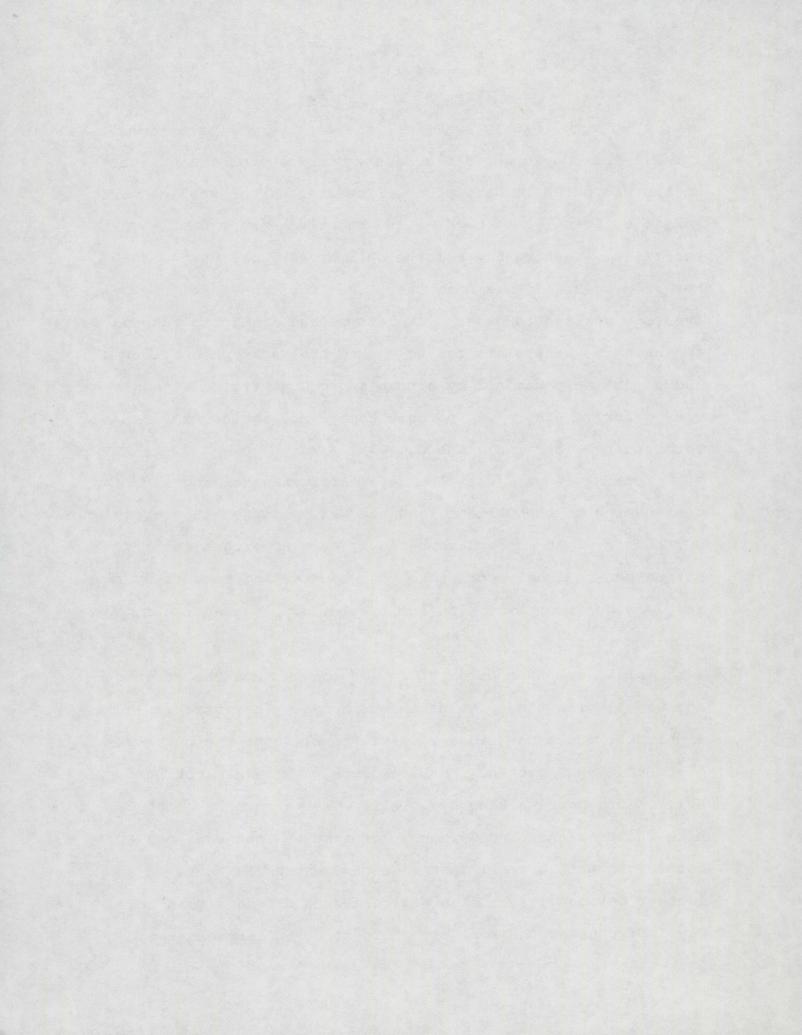


Jews. We were in this small village with very little room for all the people who had suddenly descended on it. We sat on the ground while Nazi planes flew over us and soon we were subjected to a lot of bombing and shooting: and I was terrified. Then we saw a large ship appear, called the Jan Peterson wood. (I am amazed that I remember the name!)

Everyone started to cheer; at last we had a ship to take us to England. People started to run to the docks when all of a sudden the ship was hit by a bomb and caught fire. It sank very quickly. There was no more hope; and, again, we returned to a burning Amsterdam.

I think it was just five days later when Holland surrendered to the Germans, and the Nazis started to overrun our country. It is hard to believe, even now, that one nation can callously come into your country and take it over. This was our country, with our people, our language, our laws, our children.

I can still see them marching in. No one was on the streets and we all drew the curtains in our homes. They marched right past our house since we lived so close to the outskirts of the city. I peeked. Many soldiers with awful looking helmets on, were walking by. There were many tanks along with those frightening German motor bikes. That's a motorcycle with a small open side car next to it where another person sits. Often officers were driven around this way. Of course, the real big shots drove in Mercedes Benz



automobiles. The Nazis kept marching for hours on end: soldiers on foot, all sorts of weapons, a dreadful sight!

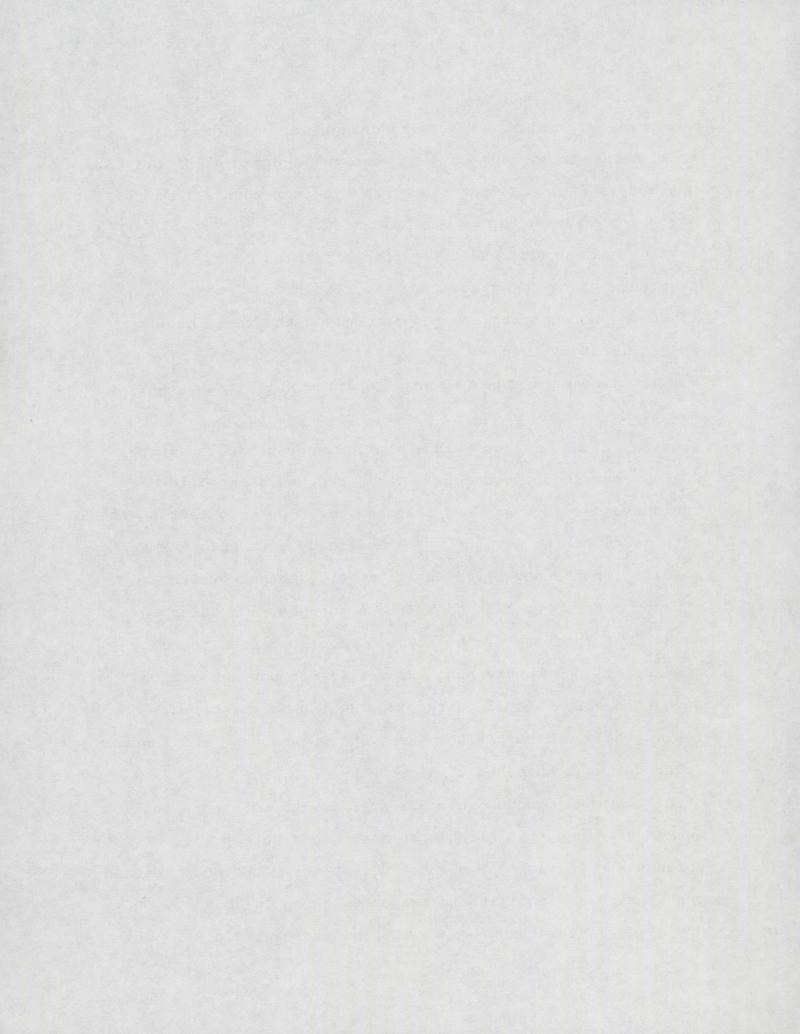
Not surprisingly at that time I had no idea what all of this was going to mean for me and my family.

I was in 5th grade, and after things settled down, we continued going to school. By "settled down" I mean that, although the shooting and bombing ceased the whole country was still in a panic.

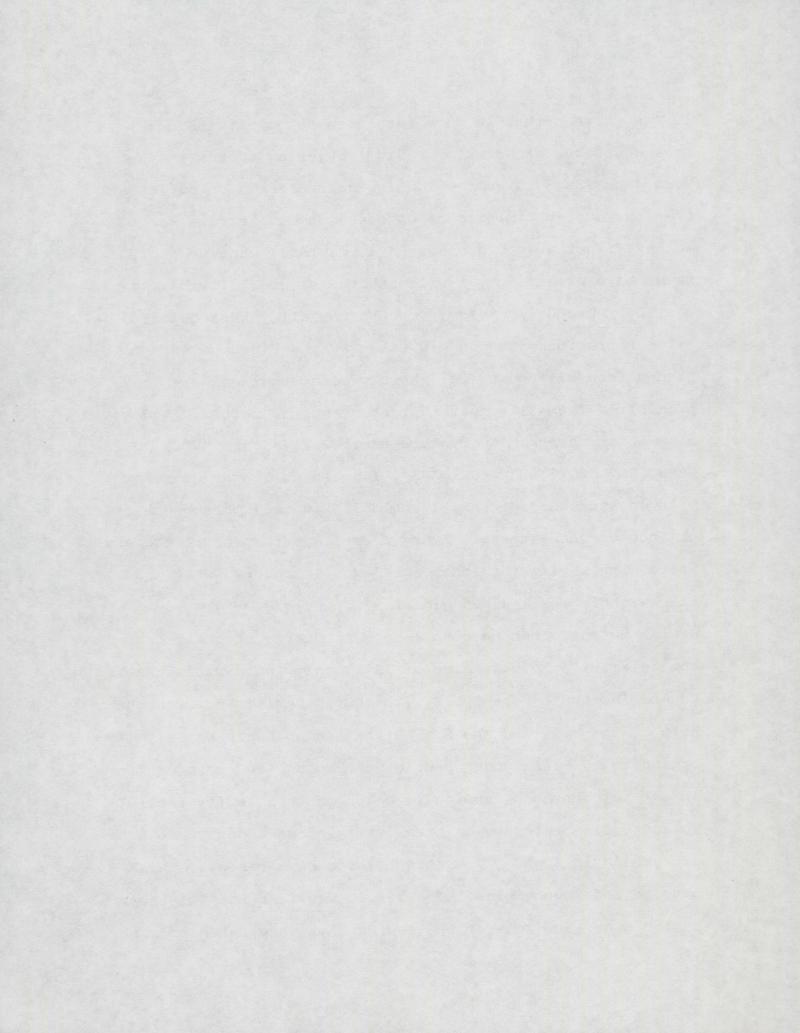
Now we lived under the German occupation which meant everyone had to do exactly what the Germans told you to do. If someone didn't follow rules, the consequences were severe. Our own government was gone. The Queen had escaped to England and I felt she had abandoned me. We were left to the very mercy of the Germans. I had already seen some German soldiers on the day before Holland fell; these were the parachute troops coming down into Amsterdam. One dropped down right in front of our house. People started to run towards him to capture him. He was just a boy who couldn't have been more than 15 years old. He looked so scared, fearing he would be killed. Everyone walked away and I never found out what happened to him.

After they had marched into Holland, the streets were full of German soldiers. At first when they would walk by us, my friends and I stuck out our tongues at them. We soon learned that that was a foolish and dangerous thing to do.

For us Jews everything became more and more difficult. When

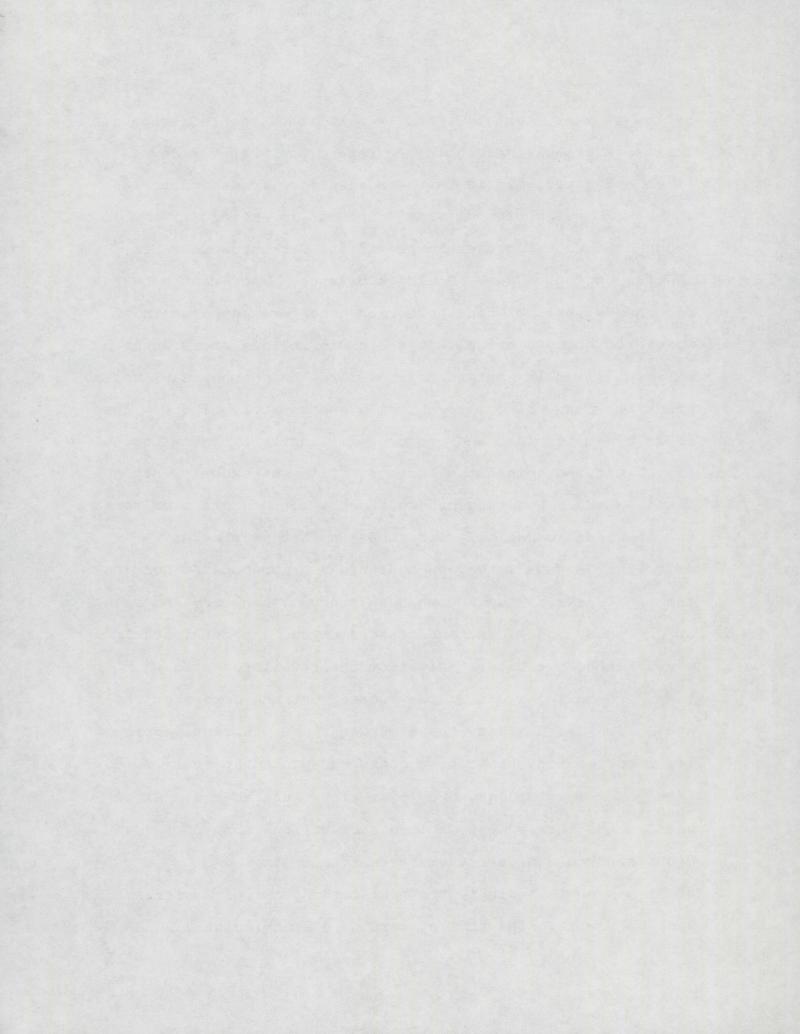


it was decreed that we were forbidden to go outside our houses without the star of David (a yellow star with the word Jood (Jew) in Hebrew looking characters) on our chest, even the most optimistic of us feared that our fate was What we could never have imagined, what we could never have dreamt in our wildest dreams, gradually became reality. Gradually, slowly, but after all, oh so quickly, all our precious freedom was taken away. First we were banned from all societies; shortly after that we were prohibited from all theaters restaurants or cafe's. And so many other things. Everywhere there were signs "VOOR JODEN VERBODEN" "FORBIDDEN FOR JEWS". I could no longer go to my beloved ice skating rink; I couldn't sit on a park bench or go into certain stores. Everywhere I saw that big black and white sign saying forbidden for Jews, I wondered what had I done wrong? Was I a bad girl now? Jewish business men were no longer in charge of their own companies. In the beginning of 1941, ugly incidents began to occur. Incited by the N.S.B. (the Dutch Nazis) and with the help of the S.S. and the S.A. (the German Super Nazis) behind them, a few young people went to an ice cream parlor in our neighborhood knowing it belonged to a Jewish family. These hoodlums started to break the windows and kick down everything in sight. The neighborhood boys resented this outrage and fought back. The result was that the ice cream parlor owner and some of the Jewish boys were taken prisoner



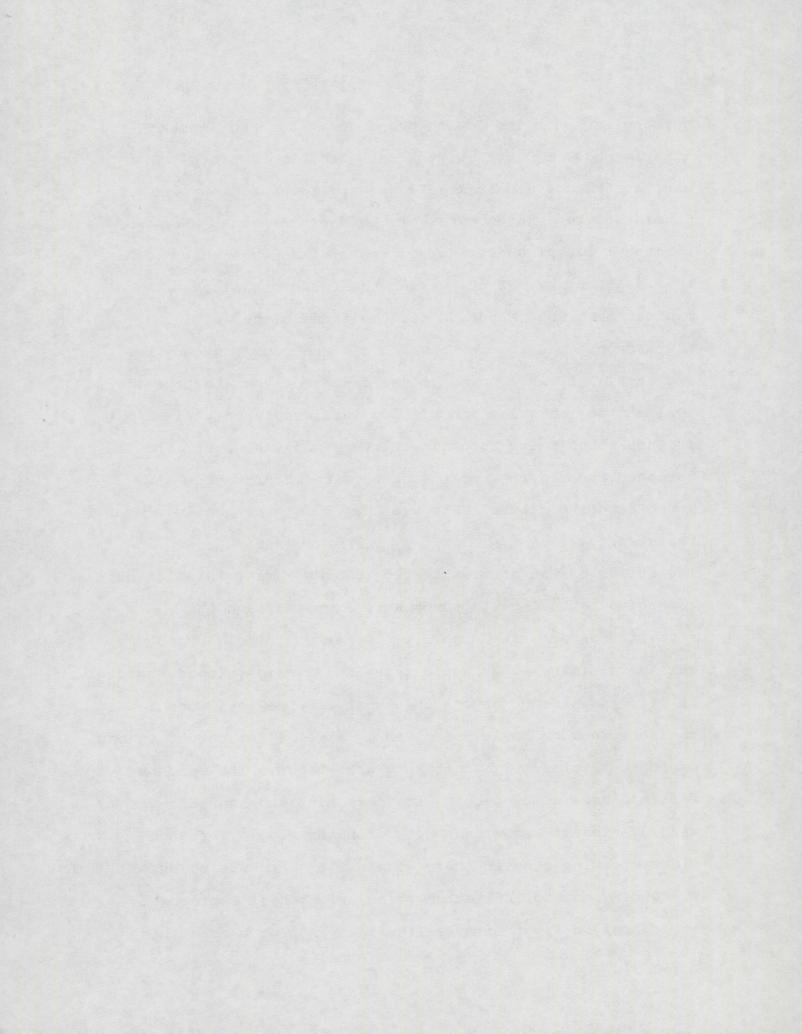
by the Germans, tortured, and then killed. People recognized that such attacks were going to take place wherever Jews lived and especially in the area specifically designated as the Jewish neighborhood. The young men in Amsterdam, the tough ones, got together to see if the Germans were really beating up their Jews. Could it be true? They wanted to see for themselves; so when the German gangsters appeared they were greeted by a group that seemed to include every Dutch male who lived in Amsterdam. The first thing they saw, was a pregnant woman being thrown from a second story window. crowd became violent and ended up killing some of the Dutch Nazis, who had joined the Germans. This was exactly what the Nazis wanted. Now they had an excuse. It was all over for the Jews, and especially for those in that particular district. A week later, on a Saturday afternoon the Germans came in trucks. They apprehended every man and boy and beat up everybody and kicked and dragged anyone who got in their way. Fathers were torn away from their children with whom they were taking a walk. They sorted out the Jews from the non-Jews. The next day these murderers of innocent people returned, wearing their high boots and picked up every male in sight. They dragged away over eight hundred men. Since the Germans carried out wholesale executions none of these eight hundred men were ever heard from again. After a sleepless night, the next morning all of Amsterdam

went on strike. The trolley cars were standing still and



nothing worked. The Jewish people were touched and thrilled at this show of Dutch unity. Catholic, Protestants, Jews, what difference did it make? We were all Dutchmen, who understood the consequences of the Nazi invasion. We went through a lot of suffering, but none of us would have wanted to miss that day. That evening the Dutch organized a protest-meeting. Hundreds and thousands of our non-Jewish towns people passed our house: girls and woman, sturdy men and boys. All were going to the center of town to protest against the injustice and cruelty inflicted upon their friends: their own Dutch Jews. Very soon, however, the Germans appeared in trucks mounted with machine guns and mowed down the crowd. This was the end of the people's open resistance.

The suffering was not restricted to Jews. Many intellectuals belonging to anti Nazi-groups were arrested, and the situation deteriorated rapidly. They would hold round ups called razzia's. They would rush into a neighborhood, cordon it off, and pick up anyone they wanted. One day, when I was coming home from Music School on my bike, I got caught in one of these ratzias. I didn't know what to do. The Germans were all around me, people were screaming and running; and I was all alone. The Germans were grabbing people left and right, forcing them in their wagons. I just kept going, pretending not to look at anything or anyone; I placed my Music book in front of my yellow star, hoping that my blond

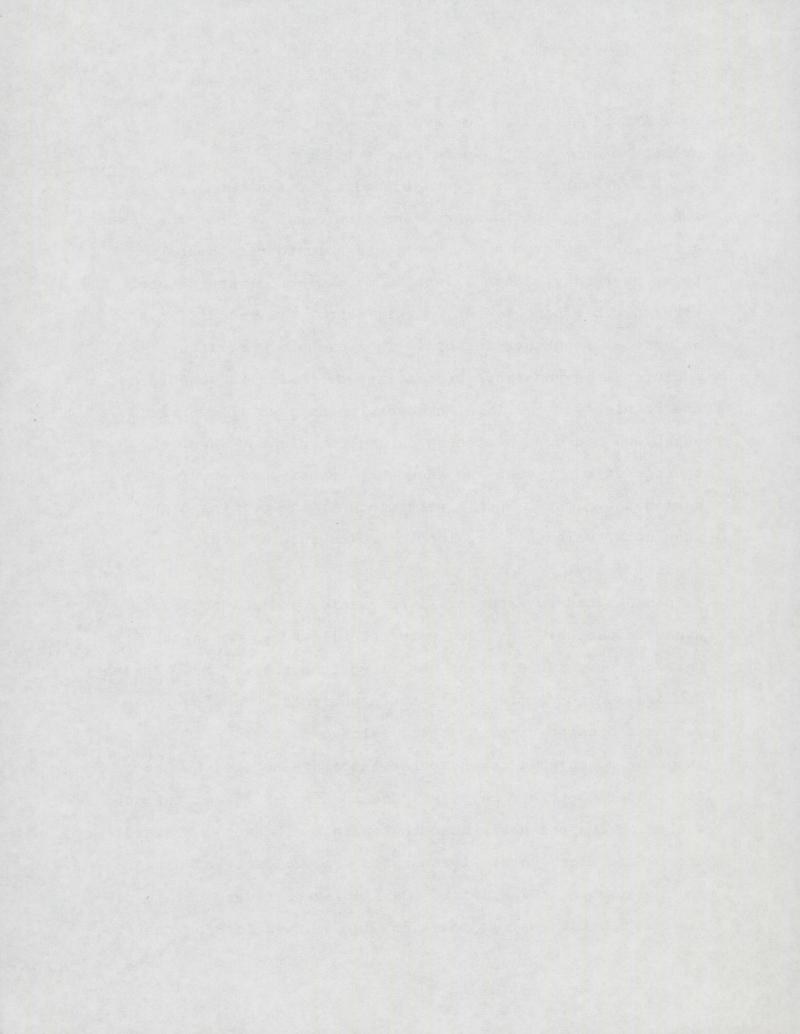


hair and blue eyes would save me. When I got home I collapsed and was unable to stop sobbing.

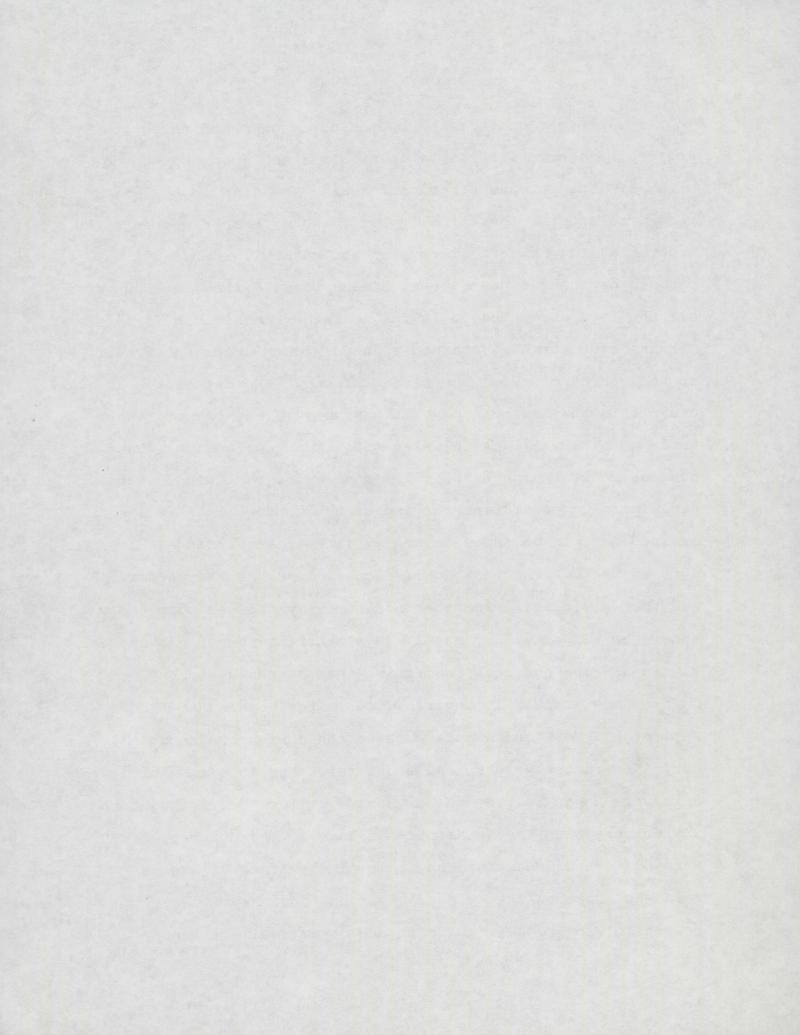
All the Jewish children were forced to attend separate schools, where the teachers were also Jewish. The school was quite far away from home, but I was able to ride my bike there every day. When I went to my old school the teachers were terribly strict, but in this school, it was different. We were all together in this. The teachers were like additional grandparents protecting us. Going to school in the morning was terrible, however, because we all worried about who had been picked-up during the night. When we spotted an empty seat, we knew what tragedy had occurred during the night. When a very close friend of mine didn't show up, I cried all day long. He was such a lovely sensitive boy!

My parents had to hand in silver, radios and all sorts of other valuables. The Jews were not allowed to go to the Universities, and everyone was fired from their jobs. Jewish doctors had to dismiss their Aryan patients. Many of those patients brought gifts to their beloved doctors.

In order to be able to escape at a moments notice, we had a rope attached to our balcony. One morning at 7 a.m. the door bell rang and the Nazis came to search our house. We were terrified. They carefully searched every closet and drawer in each room. It was awful. Our housekeeper very calmly put all my mothers jewelry (Jews were not allowed to keep their



jewelry*) in her dust cloth pretending to dust and threw it off the balcony. The people downstairs knew just what to do with it. The Germans stayed for hours. We didn't know what they were after. They finally left, and my mother was so happy that they hadn't discovered her secret larder. My parents decided it was a great hiding place. They removed all the food and prepared it for my father to hide in if the Germans came for him. He had even put cough drops on a shelf in the secret closet. The hiding place was in one of the closets in the living room. It was very large, but my father built a false wall inside which made it appear smaller, but conventional. A month later the same event took place : an early morning persistent ringing of the doorbell. A well dressed man who demanded to see my father; Announcing "I am sent by the Government's Commissioner, I am the "Verwalter". And that was that! From that moment on my dad was completely under the verwalter's control. My father no longer had any say in his own business, something that happened to many Some arrived at their office in the morning to find a Nazi at his desk and simple ordered the Jewish businessman New rumors were spread about raids and more and more Jews were taken away by the Germans. Children were taught to say no more than "my father is not home". The Dutch police were brave and wonderful, and some times warned us when a raid was about to take place. Everyone had the responsibility to call at least one other family; and

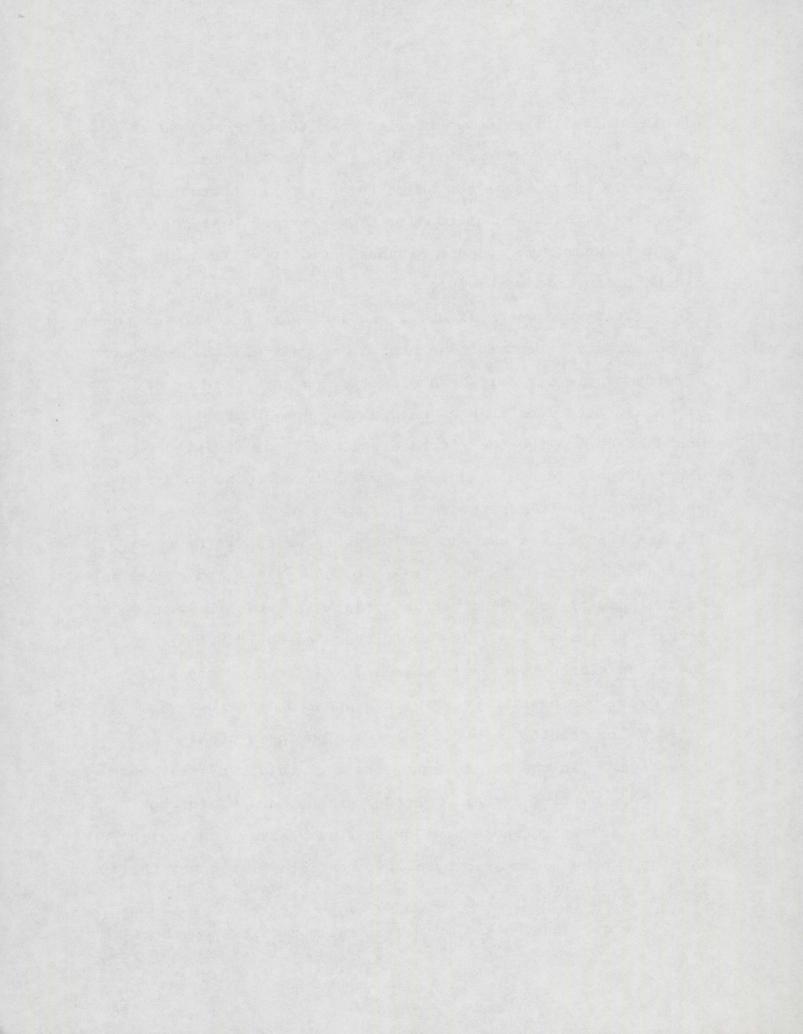


within minutes, people had hurried from their homes and were hiding out with non-Jewish friends. Most of the Dutch people were truly marvellous; and no matter how small their house, they always found enough room to hide a friend. At the slightest worrisome sound my father would crawl into his hiding place. It was awful.

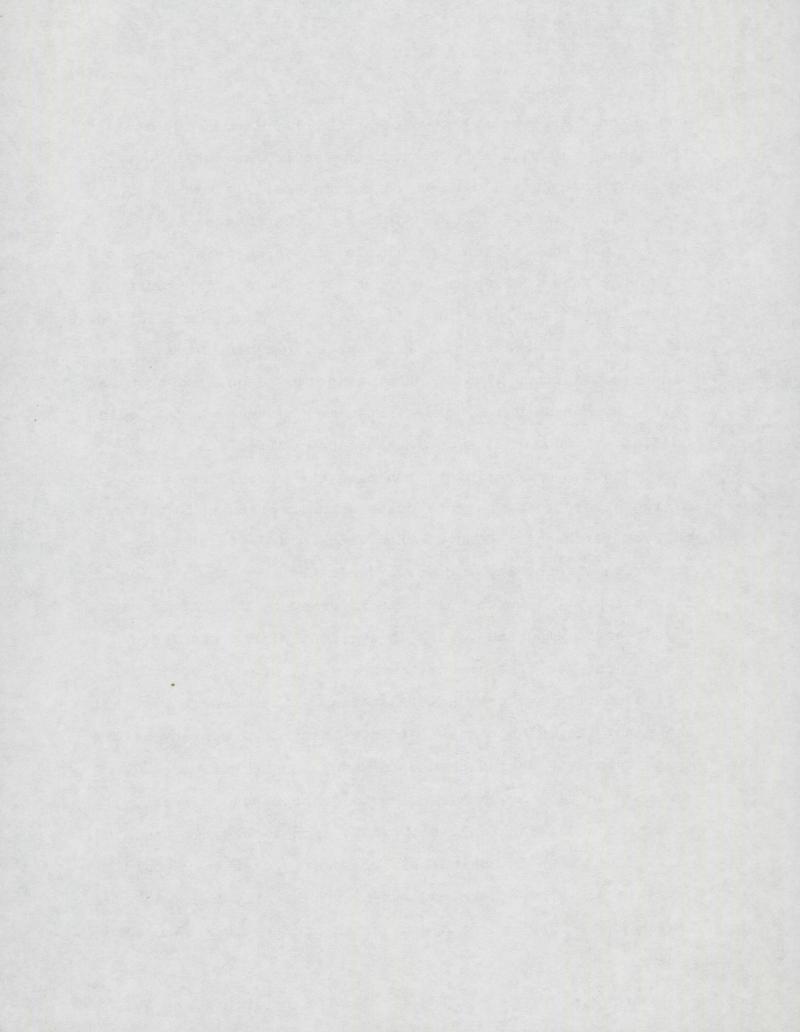
Very little food was available, and Jews were not allowed to go to market, except for one hour a day when all the food was already gone. Our neighbors all tried to take care of us, so we had more food than we needed. Our non-Jewish fiends would stand in line for six to eight hours but insisted on sharing their food with us. A Jew who tried to go to market would quickly get arrested.

I think that it was the end of 1941 when we had to begin wearing the star of David. It was bright yellow and as large as the palm of your hand with big black imitation Hebrew letters that said JOOD; Jew in Dutch. One could not leave the house without wearing the yellow star sewn on the left side over your heart. We knew this spelled disaster. The non-Jews reacted to this order by wearing these stars themselves. In the trolly cars, the men would tip their hats to anybody wearing a star. The Germans put an end to that quickly, arresting those non-Jewish star wearers and beating them up. We were obsessed by a fear that stays with you the rest of your life.

One day Nanny asked my mom if she could take our boat



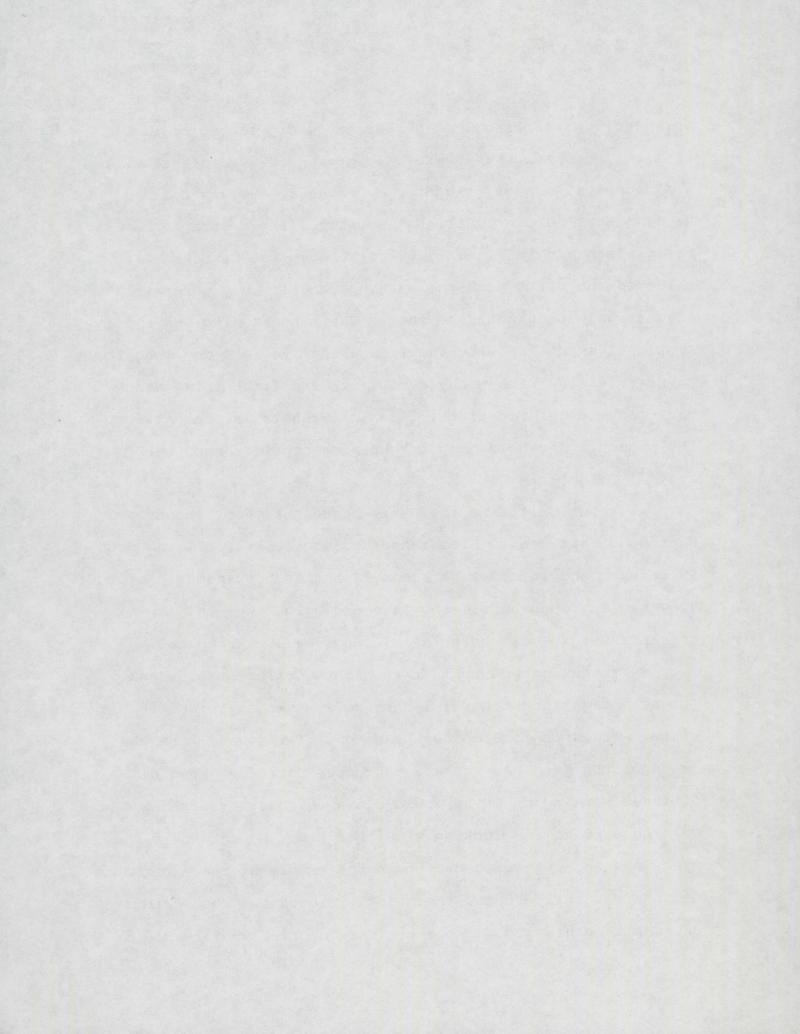
and go on the river with two of her girl friends. My mother thought for a while about that. One never knew what Jews were and were not allowed to do but she said it was O.K. I started to scream and cry, I told my mother she should not let her go, that something terrible was going to happen that I had the same feeling in my chest that I had a few hours before the German invasion. I said it was again hard for me to breathe. I pleaded with Mama not to let her go. My sister was furious with me. She was going to go, and that was that. My Mom said O.K. and assured me that everything would be fine. At about five o'clock someone called and told my Mom, "I hope your children aren't on the river; they are having a raid." My parents grabbed their bikes and started to look for Nanny. Each of them went in a different direction without any success. And then they saw the boat, it was empty. A Dutch policeman informed my Mom the Germans have been raiding and taking in everyone with a star, even people just standing around. Mom and Dad went to every police station and prison in Amsterdam. The answers were all the same: they didn't know a thing. Many days went by before my parents knew what happened to Nanny and her friends. I remember so well my father going to Gestapo headquarters, something a Jew shouldn't do; but he didn't care, it was his child. He wore his unbreakable glasses in case they would beat him up. They just send him away. Luckily a very clever lawyer, whom they got to plead for the three girls (who were



only 16) kept calling them children: and pleaded for their lives. The other person who helped was the "verwalter" who had become a sort of friend of my fathers. He was not a Nazi, just a German civilian. Sometimes it is strange how things turn out in life. Two weeks later the Germans released the girls with the warning that if they were ever caught again they would be shot. Their homecoming was a very emotional event. Family and friends arrived all day long to congratulate us with Nanny's return. The first thing Nanny had to do is get rid of the lies in her hair, a present from the prison. She told many frightening stories about her stay.

At about this time the Nazis began the deportations. What does that mean? Hitler had decided to kill all the Jews in Europe, and in order to accomplish this horrendous project they had to round up all the Jews and bring them to concentration camps where the killings were carried out.

My father stayed up late at night working at his desk. It was a magnificent desk, I have never seen anything like it since. It was a fold up desk made out of rosewood, and the grain of the wood had the most gorgeous pattern. When he finished working on it he would close the desk by pushing the working part up and locking it with a key. He sat there every evening; I would get up in the middle of the night and find he was still there. He quickly closed the desk, and I would sit on his lap for comfort. I wondered what he did at

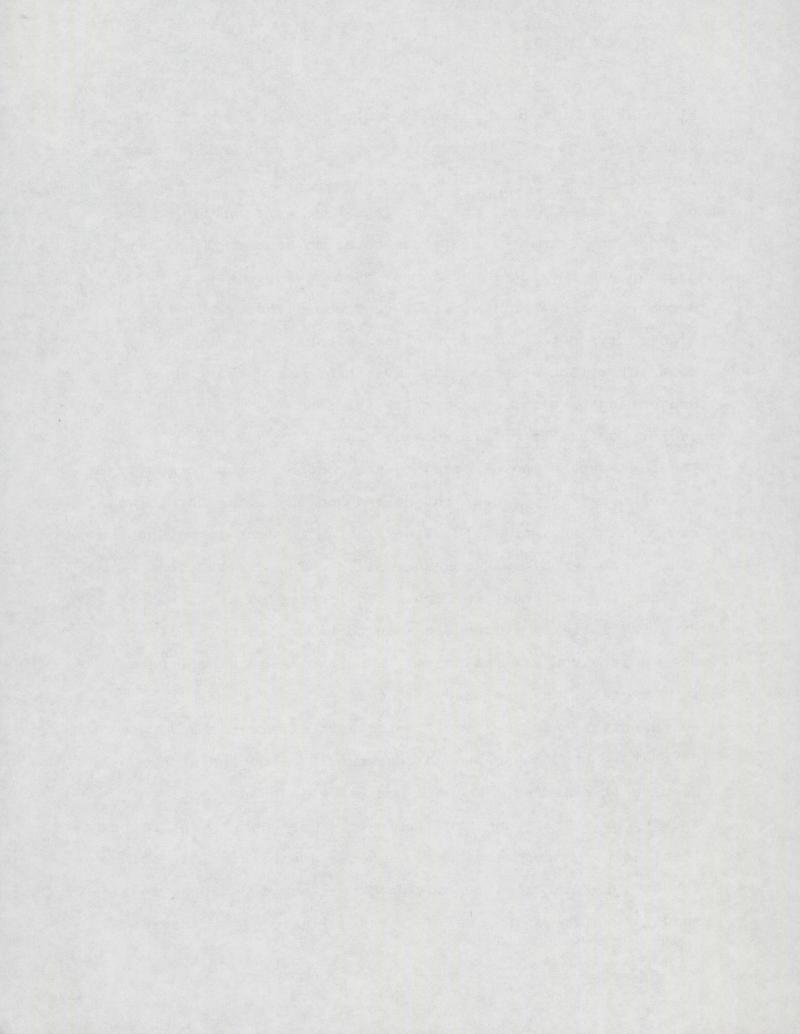


his desk and why he'd close it so quickly so I couldn't see what he was doing. His behavior was very unusual, because my parents rarely hid anything from the children. I slept very poorly, scared of all the rumblings that went on during the night. The German aircraft came over to bomb England; the English and Americans would pass over on their way to bomb Germany; and the anti aircraft guns would thunder in the night, trying to shoot down allied planes.

Much later, I discovered that my father was working on a project that helped save our lives. Since it was a big secret, he had to do his work at night.

The Jews were being deported to the concentrations camps, and we knew that it was bad; but no one had any idea what it was realy like. We were told we were going to work camps, but we didn't know people would never return. The Germans sent notices to your house in alphabetical order so we knew that with the letter "G", we were soon to be called. The first one we received was for Nanny. When our mailman delivered it, he cried, when he handed it over.

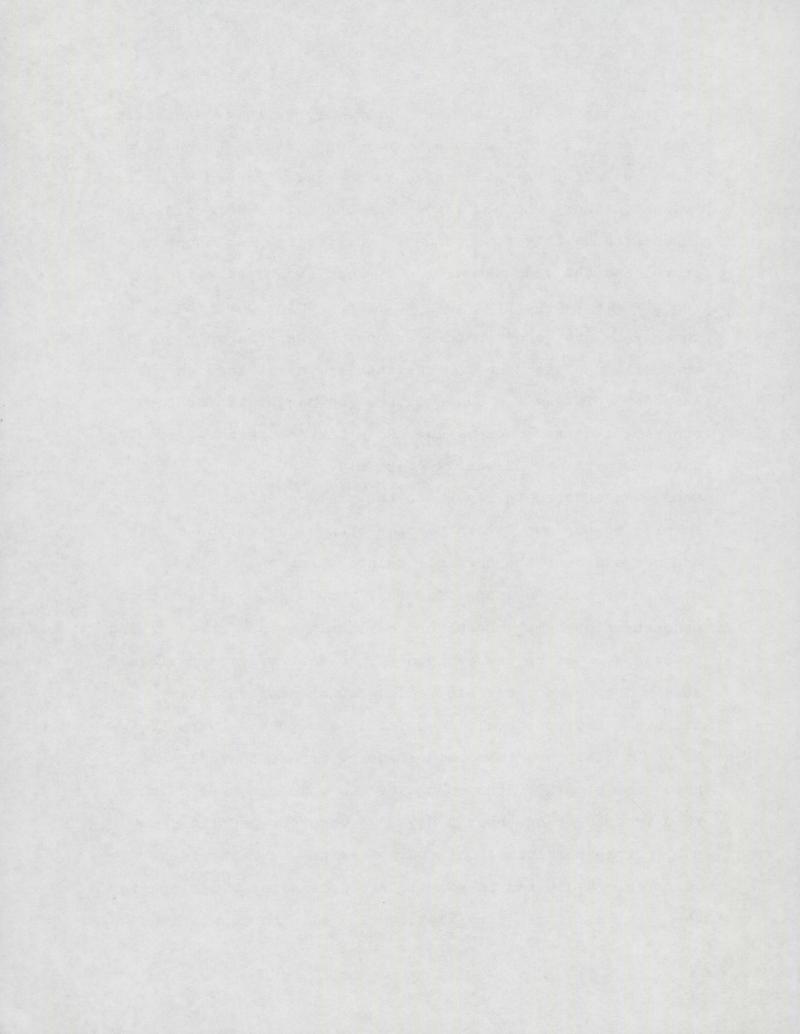
My parents sat us down one evening soon afterwards and told us that we had to escape and that our lives depended on keeping it a secret. We were not to tell anyone. No exceptions. That was sure difficult. Cora and I went to our local jewelry store together. I had a great idea. I decided to buy myself a cross. I couldn't tell her the truth, so I said it was for a non Jewish friend. I have always had a



when I don't tell the truth. She didn't say anything at the time; but after the war, she said she had wondered about it. My aunt Esther, who now lives here and is 81 years old, had lunch with us this afternoon. I was telling her about this story, and she said she will only read about the escape. The rest is too painful for her. She reminded me that I had come by to say good-bye to everyone. I was the only one of my family who had done so. Neither she nor I know why it happened this way, we guess it was too dangerous for the others. I do remember my aunt Ro's baby and wished I could take him with me. I was 12 years old.

Nanny was ordered to report to the train station at 5 in the morning so the non Jewish population would still be asleep and not aware of the horrible things going on.

My parents decided long since that they were never going to a concentration camp. Despite the risks they preferred trying to escape. But no one escaped! It was utterly impossible. Jews had to wear their big Yellow Jewish star on their clothes. Everyone could immediately see that we were Jews. We would also have to obtain identity papers that did not have that big "J", stamped on it. We were not free to buy food except for one hour a day. We were not permitted on public transportation. Of course trains were out of the question. A Jew had to stay in his home after 7 o'clock in the evening. I can't really describe all the regulations we

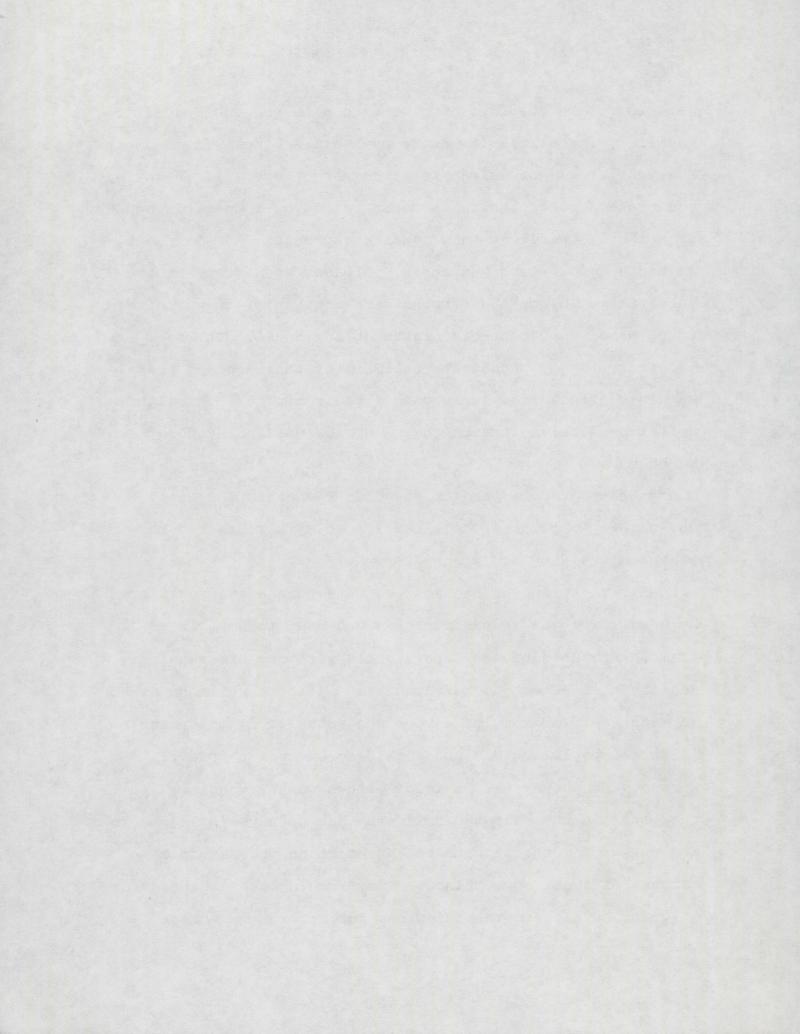


were forced to obey. I just want to give you an idea of how seemingly impossible it was to move a few blocks from home. Everywhere we went German soldiers were there. If in any way you broke a rule, the Nazis would throw you into jail; and from there, there was only torture and death.

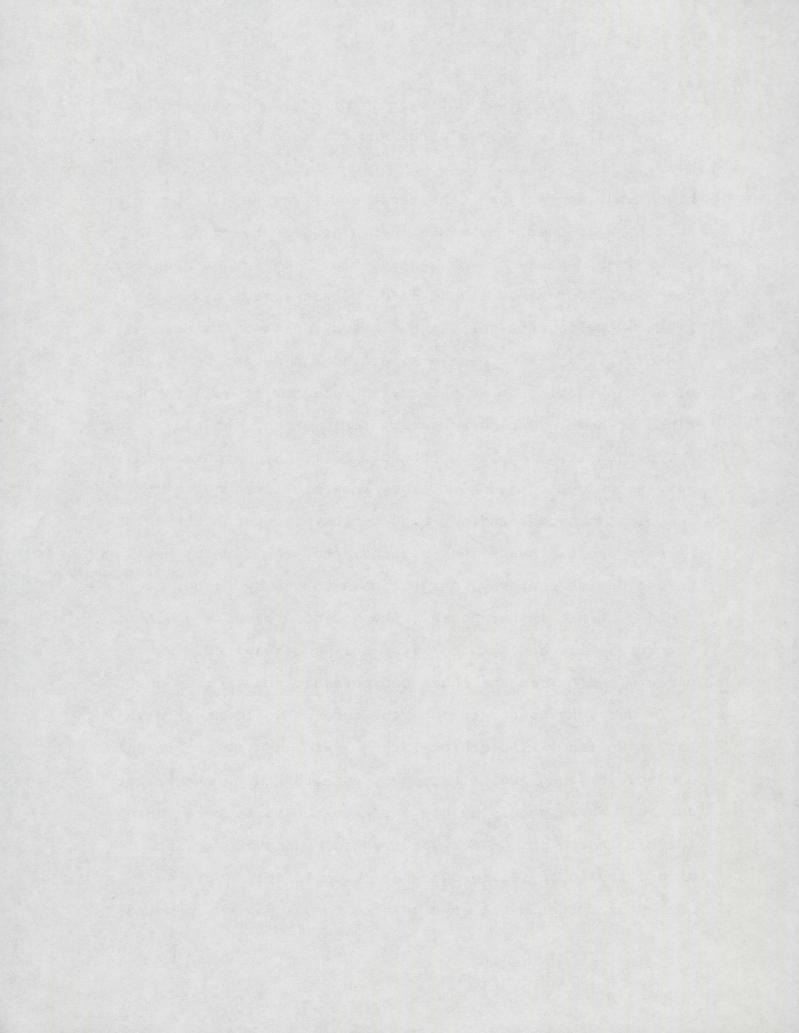
We had a good friend who was a professor of History at the University. Since the Germans were after him, he was afraid to go home. He spent his nights at our house. It was necessary for my parents to tell him of their escape plans. He was convinced they were out of their minds. "You might as well trow a brick through the window of Gestapo Headquarters" he chided.

Nanny had to report; and if she didn't show up the Nazis would come to get the whole family; so my parents had to leave before they had planned.

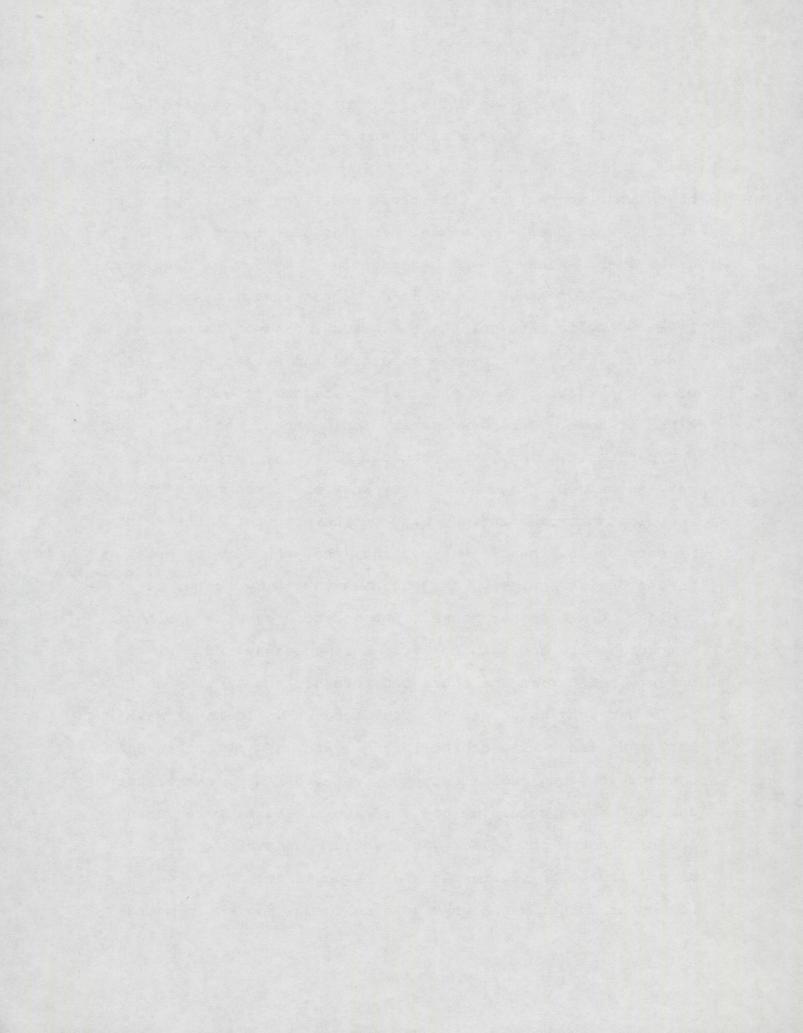
Actually the planning had started more than a year earlier. My dad knew a man in his business who used to smuggle diamonds to Belgium, so Papa started visiting him regularly and trying his best to befriend him. After a while he asked Mr.Maandag if he knew of anyone who smuggled diamonds and if those people could also be paid to smuggle people. It worked. He put my dad in touch with a woman smuggler, and that started it. First of all she made us have false papers and put us in contact with the underground who was able to arrange at least some things. "They" could obtain papers for only for my dad and the children, but not for my mother. My



aunt Bep, the wife of my mothers brother and not Jewish, volunteered to give my mother her papers. They looked sufficiently alike on the photographs of the identity papers so the chance of "getting away with it seemed reasonable; if we were caught my aunt was in as much danger as my mother. What a heroine my aunt Bep was in her quiet yet elegant way! We would calmly leave the house as if we were coming back within the hour. My dad removed some beads from a box and asked me, "how do you like these?" My response was, "they probably have diamonds inside". My father turned white and my mother put her hands in front of her mouth to muffle a scream. You guessed it; I was right. What were they going to do now? There was no time left to do anything else. Was the camouflage that obvious? They decided to go through with it anyway. The beads were beautifully colorful. My father had sat up night after night for a year producing them. A friend of his had made a metal chain consisting of small round links. In each round link Papa put two diamonds. The diamonds were then covered with a diamond cement, which is what the diamonds being polished are held in by, when being put in the tool. It looks like brown clay and has a very low melting point. When warm, you can kneed the diamond cement as if it was clay: but when it gets cold, it is as strong as ordinary cement. When Papa covered the diamonds with the cement it became a bead. When the whole thing was finished, it was a strand of brown beads. Then he painted



Each strand was different. One strand even had dots on it. All were very colorful and reminded me of Italian beads I had seen recently. The older girls were wearing beads that looked just like these and I was very happy to be able to wear them. My mother had a double strand of pale green ones; Nanny's were red and blue; my father made some cuff links for himself. He said, "I can always make a living." My parents told us the beads indeed contained diamonds; and, if we became separated and needed money, each of us was wearing her own fund. I remember so well our last night at home. Our housekeeper, Yopie Groen, who had worked for us some time ago, rang the doorbell. My parents were very surprised to see her. They knew she lived quite far away in Rotterdam, and was nine months pregnant. She told my parents she had heard that morning, that the Germans were taking Jewish men away, and she came to get my father so she could hide him in her house. She had come by bike and her brother in law accompanied her. She was exhausted. My parents put her on the couch and told her about our plans. Yopie was very concerned and convinced we would never make it out of Holland. The doorbell rang again, and my cousin Jack Courant, a young medical student, came to ask my father for advise. Where should he go? He knew the Nazis were coming for him that night. Jack was frantic, and everyone sat around trying to figure out what he could do. Yopie said to him "your mother was always so nice to me when she came to



visit here; so you can come with me, and I will hide you."

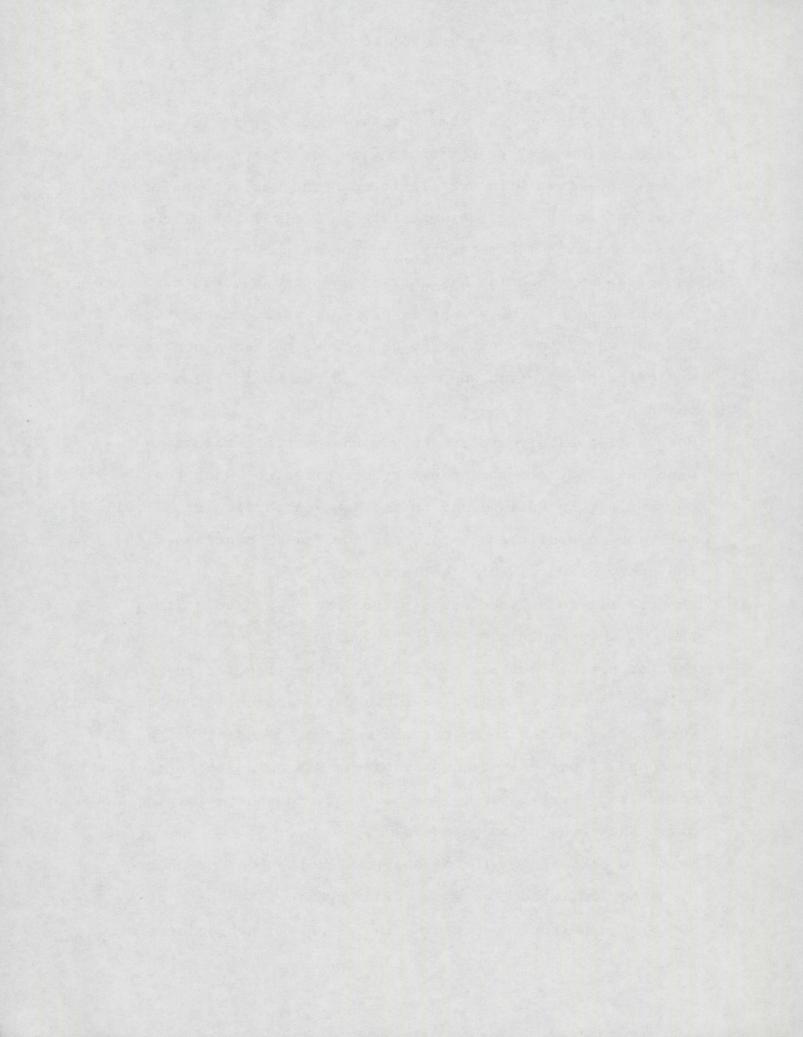
Jack did ride back to Rotterdam with her that night on their bikes. He lived with her all through the war; she saved his life. After the war, he went back to Medical School and became a doctor in Amsterdam. Yopie was very poor; and I knew from many people, how Jack as soon as he could took care of Jopie and he family. He is probably still doing it. Jack Courant was also important to us because he had a non Jewish medical school friend who earlier had become a friend of my parents.

How can I possibly explain to you the horrible things that went on? They are the true horror stories, of what the Germans did in Holland and to the Jews in particular. I will tell you some of these later, but now I will continue with the story of our leaving Holland.

We were all so nervous because the Germans had told Nanny that if they would ever catch her again, that would be the end for her. A message had come from the smuggler in Belgium, saying we could leave two days earlier. I woke up very early and ran to my parents bedroom, pleading we should go soon. I was exited and thought it was going to be a great adventure. Much later my parents confided that my urging had given them courage to go ahead.

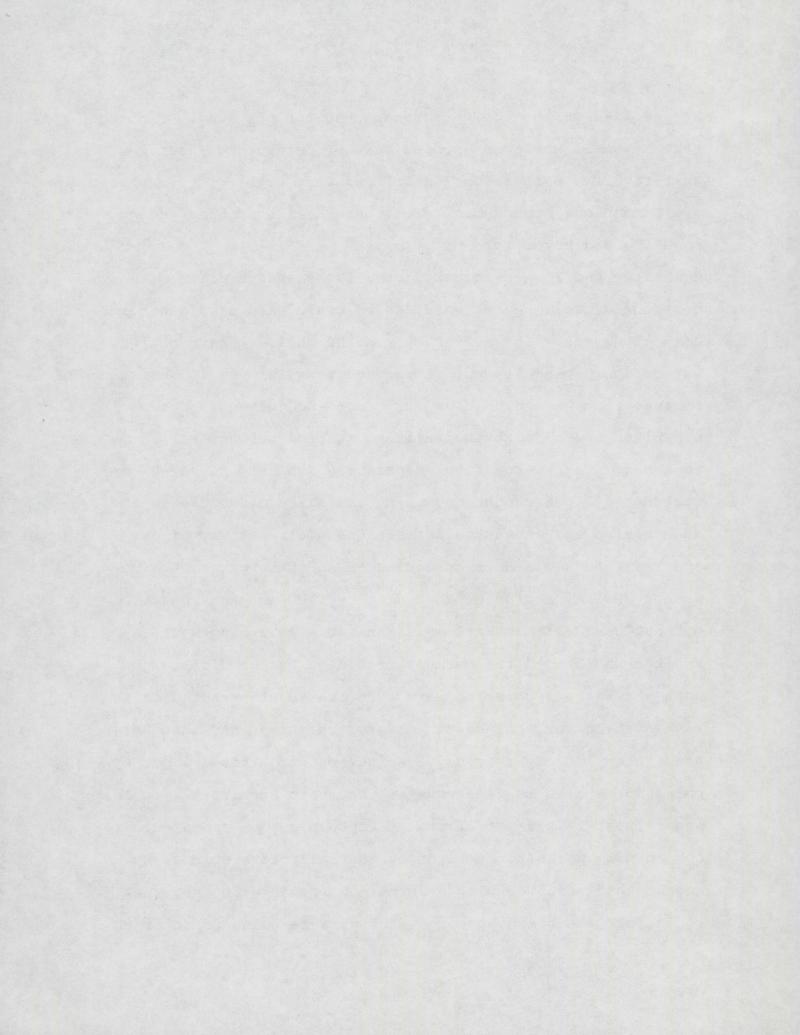
We could take along with us only the clothes on our backs.

My mother insisted I wear two of everything: two pairs of socks, two pairs of underpants, two slips and two undershirts.

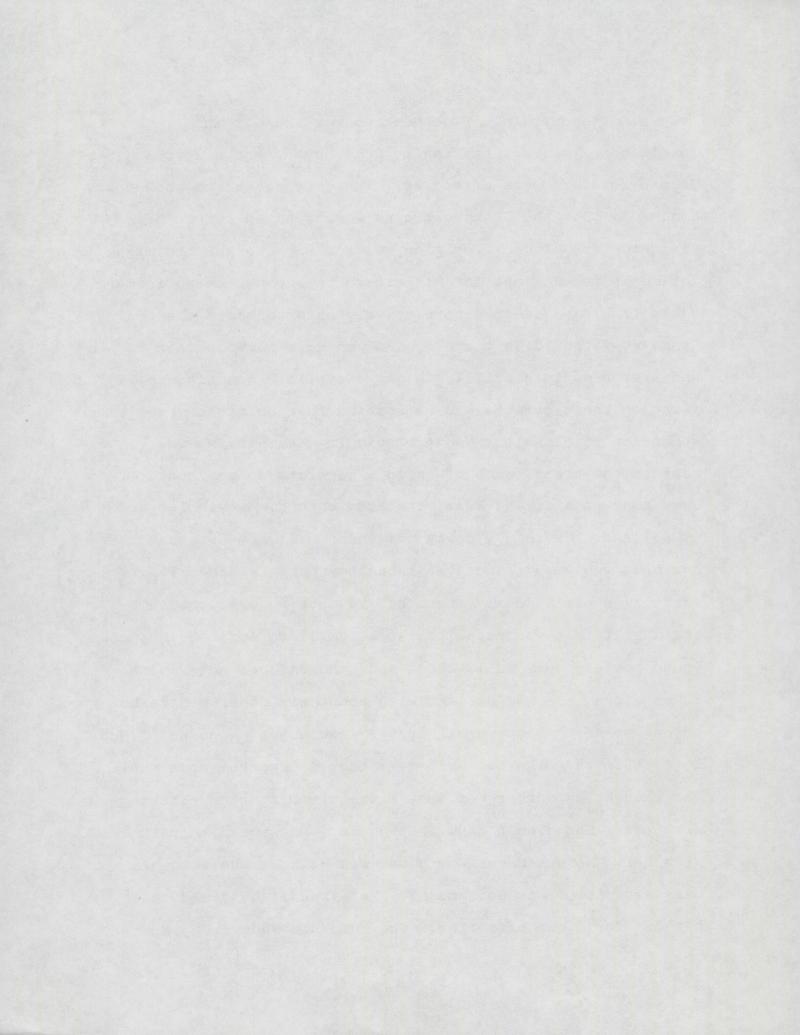


No one knew we were going further than a block away. I could take my small Moroccan -tooled leather purse, and I put my most favorite possessions in it: two very small dictionaries, one German one French but I left the English at home, being sure I would never it.

My sister and I were informed of all the escape plans. We decided to use a secret word, so we could warn each other in case of danger. It was POP. It means doll. I have no idea why or who picked it, but it served us well. Now it seems so strange that we would leave our house and just go. Get on our bikes and ride to the railroad station but not all together. We had to travel separately from now on so we wouldn't all get caught together. At six a.m. we closed the door behind us; and as we came to the small hallway of our apartment house, a door opened and a neighbor came out. He wasn't Jewish, and as he looked at us, he saw that we were without our Jewish stars. His son was a well know Nazi, a traitor who helped the Germans find Jews but we didn't know what the fathers politics were. He stared at us but didn't say anything for what seemed a very long time; and then he said "good luck my friends". We got on our bikes. I put my purse in my bike bag and rode to the train station. I could see my sister in front of me and kept an eye on my parents behind us. We left the bikes at the railroad station. parents had arranged with a former policeman whom they knew to inspect the train, because what we were going to do is to

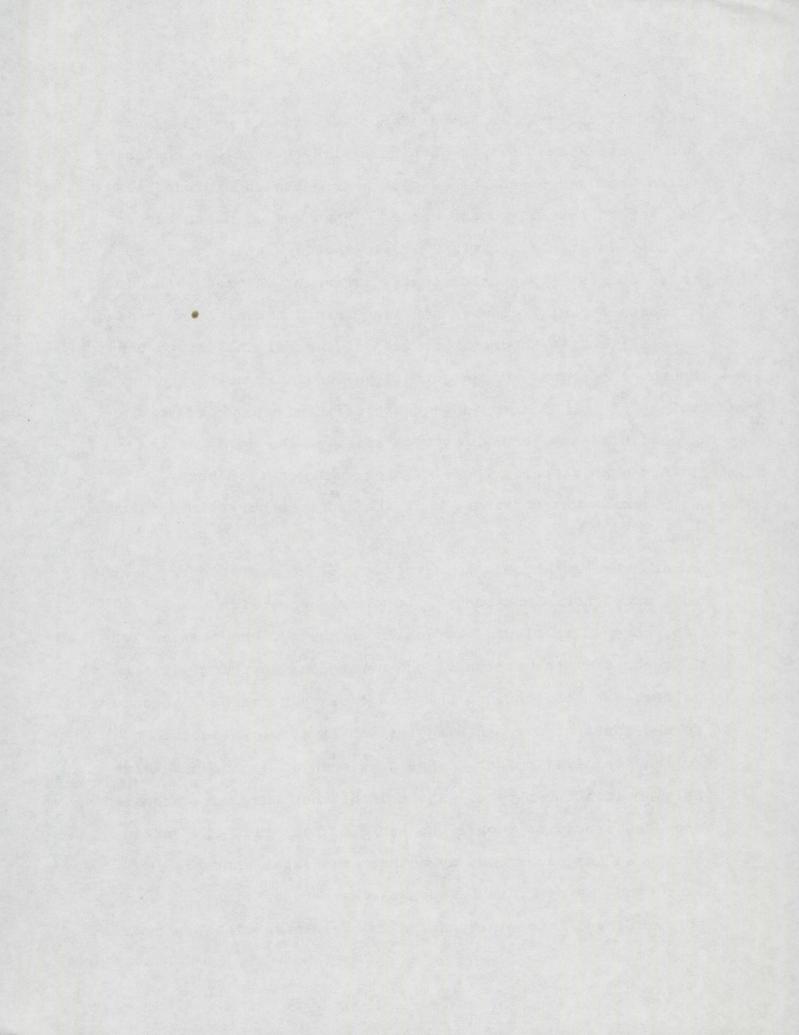


take a Gestapo Train. (The Gestapo was the German intelligence agency, the really "bad guys", of who even the German soldiers were afraid. of. The only reason we took that train was that the Gestapo trains were reputed not to be searched very often. The plan was for Papa to ask the expoliceman for a light for his cigarette and the ex-policeman would tell Papa if it was relatively safe to board the train. Since my father didn't smoke, and was more nervous than he had ever been in his life; he got a terrible coughing spell lighting the cigarette and we worried that he might draw attention to himself. We were told it was safe, so we boarded the train, each of us in a separate compartment. Jack Courant's friend Henk, insisted on accompanying us out of Holland. He said, "maybe something will come up that I can help you with"; and even though my parents had tried to discourage him suddenly there he was getting onto the same train. It felt wonderful to see a familiar face! He was a young doctor, very tall, blond and handsome but not Jewish. I was alone in a compartment with about six other people but no one spoke. As the train left I remembered my purse, I had left it in the bike bag! In my mother's compartment a man, who thought my mother was very attractive, started flirting with her. She didn't know what to do. He wanted to talk with her. He asked her where she was going. She told him our destination was Roozendaal. He asked if he could take her out for a cup of coffee. She told him she was going to



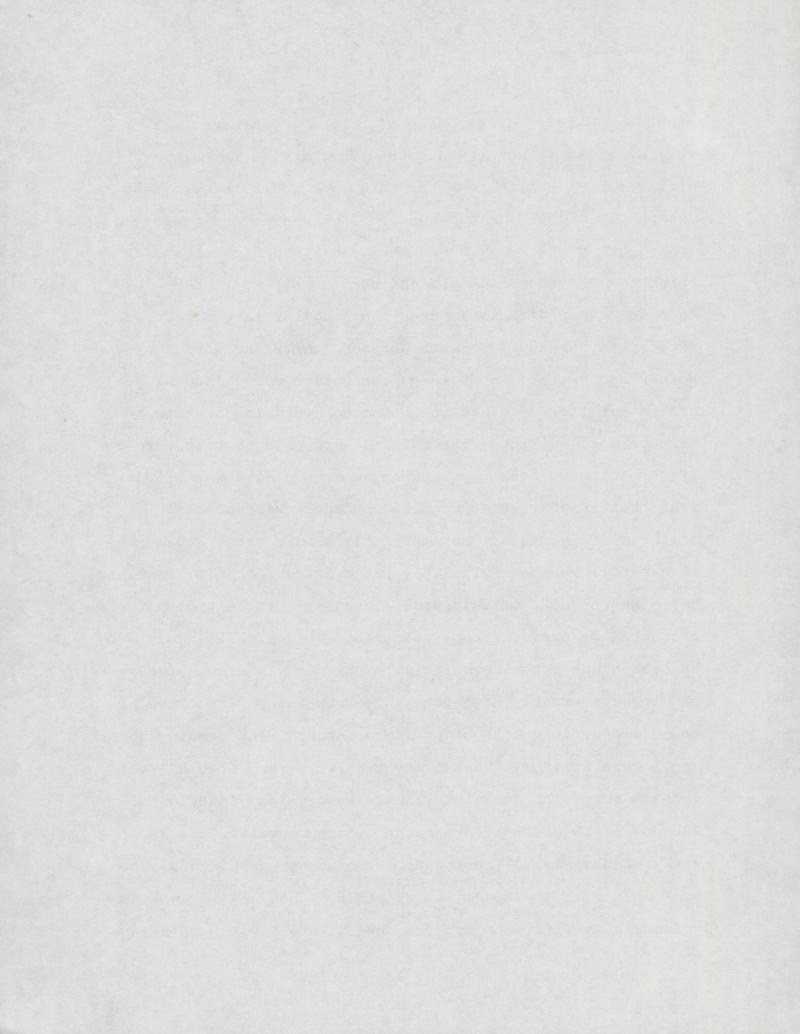
visit her children in Summer Camp. He said he could drive her there—— and she was getting panicky. What was she going to do when we got there? A person from the underground was waiting to take us to the border. What was going to happen at that unfamiliar station? Would the Germans be waiting there for us? The train finally arrived in Roozendaal and although I can't remember how long it had taken, it must have been quite a few hours since we had gone all the way to the South of Holland. As we got off the train my mother ran over to Henk (who had also just gotten off) and threw her arms around his neck, and whispered "kiss me kiss me." As the lovers were standing there kissing, the man from her compartment was convinced that she had come there to be with him.

We saw the man who had come to meet us. He was standing next to a small horse and buggy. It was a buggy, with a small cab, covered in black. We got in the buggy, and the man let me steer it. It was fun. I had never done anything like that before. We rode through the beautiful countryside. We came to the house of a woman smuggler who lived close to the Holland-Belgium border. She gave each of us our new false Belgium identity papers. She told us that they were prepared from the papers of people who had died recently. My father and I had the same name, my mother and sister another. My last name was de Bruin. I don't remember the first. I had to memorize all the information in the papers within a few



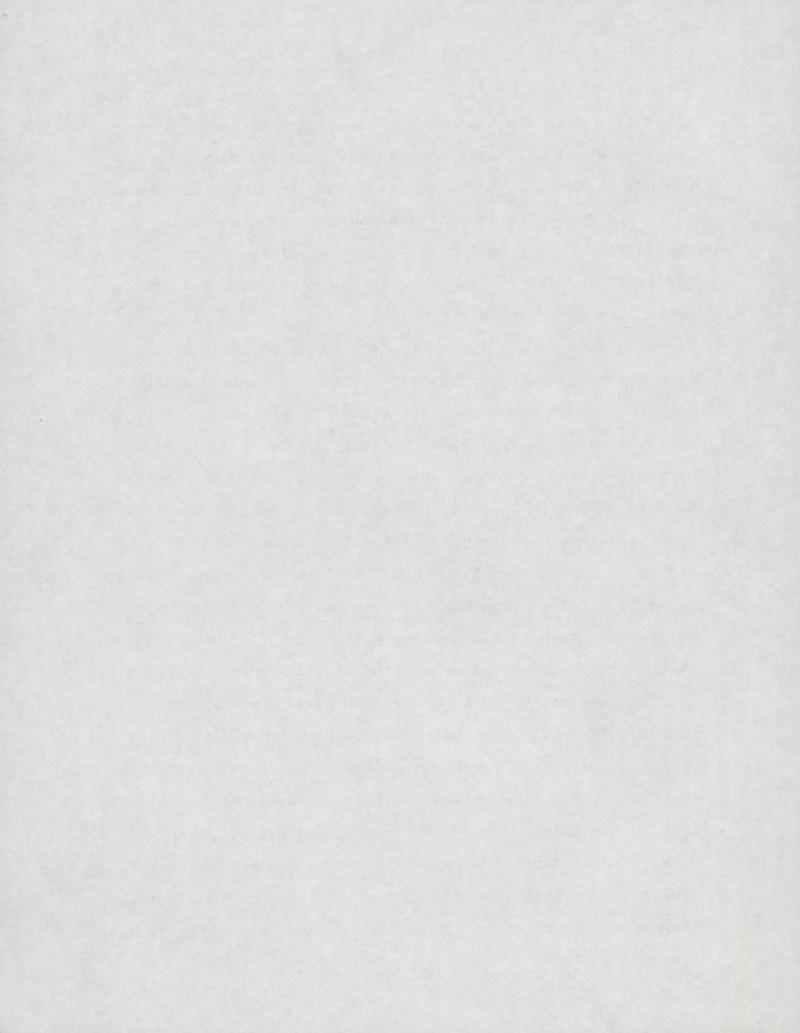
minutes. Name, address, date of birth. My picture was on it. My parents had provided the smugglers, with our pictures. We had to make the card look as if it were used. The people in Belgium had them for two years, and these looked brand new. We rubbed them and stomped on them and tried to make them look old and worn.

Because we had different names the smuggler lady decided to have my father and I go with her son, while she would take my mother and sister. The town on the border was called Nispen; and to get there you had to go through farm lands where the farmers were working. The farmers were paid to help warn us if Germans were nearby. If they were bending down all was fine; but if they were standing up, there were Germans coming. The young man put me on his handle bars, and my father followed on a bike they had provided for him. I liked being on the bike of this nice older boy. It felt good to be protected by him. We kept going for quite a while. His breathing was becoming quite labored. He was also nervous -and it was terribly dangerous. He knew the way and knew how to go and avoid check points! The farmers were bending down, and I kept hoping it would stay that way--- and it did. We made it across an invisible line. We were now in Belgium. He took us to another farm house, where we waited for my mother and sister. The front of the house was Holland, the back Belgium. The house was something I had never seen before in my life, but you can see it in old Dutch paintings.

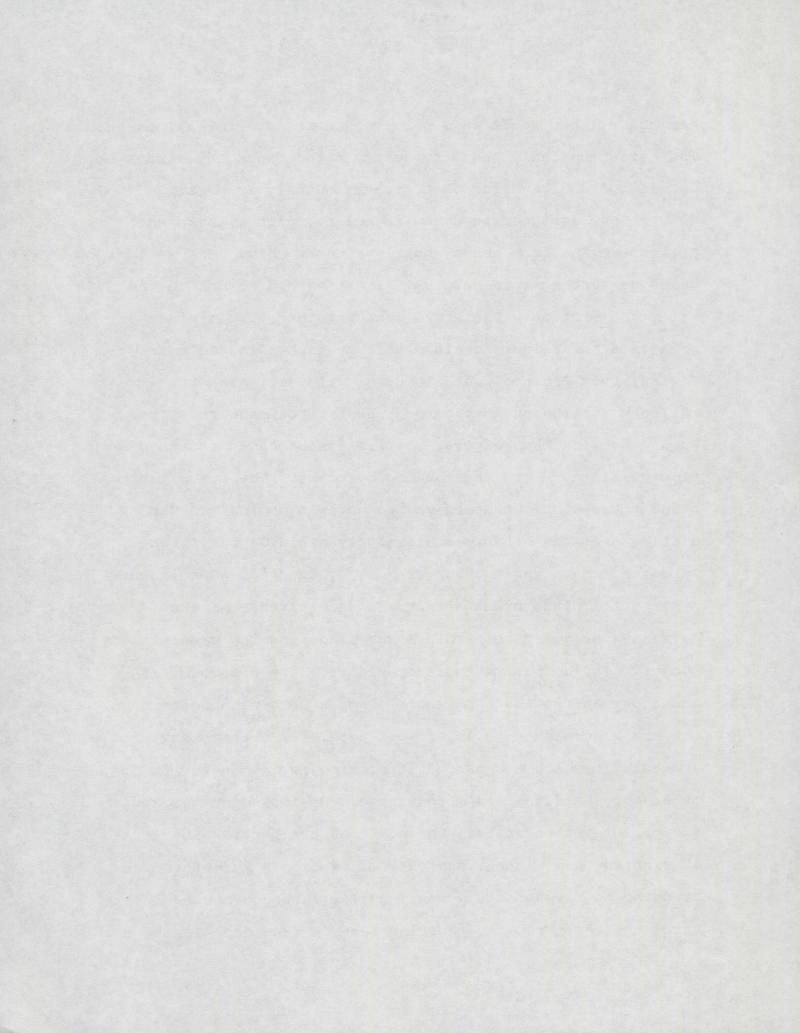


The floors were black and white tiles without rugs. The walls were wooden, and the woman who received us was in peasant costume, with a black dress and a white starched lace hat and apron. For some reason she offered me a bed which was in that same room (built into the wall) called a "bedstee" in Dutch. The mattress was very high; and, on top of it, was starched lace bedding.

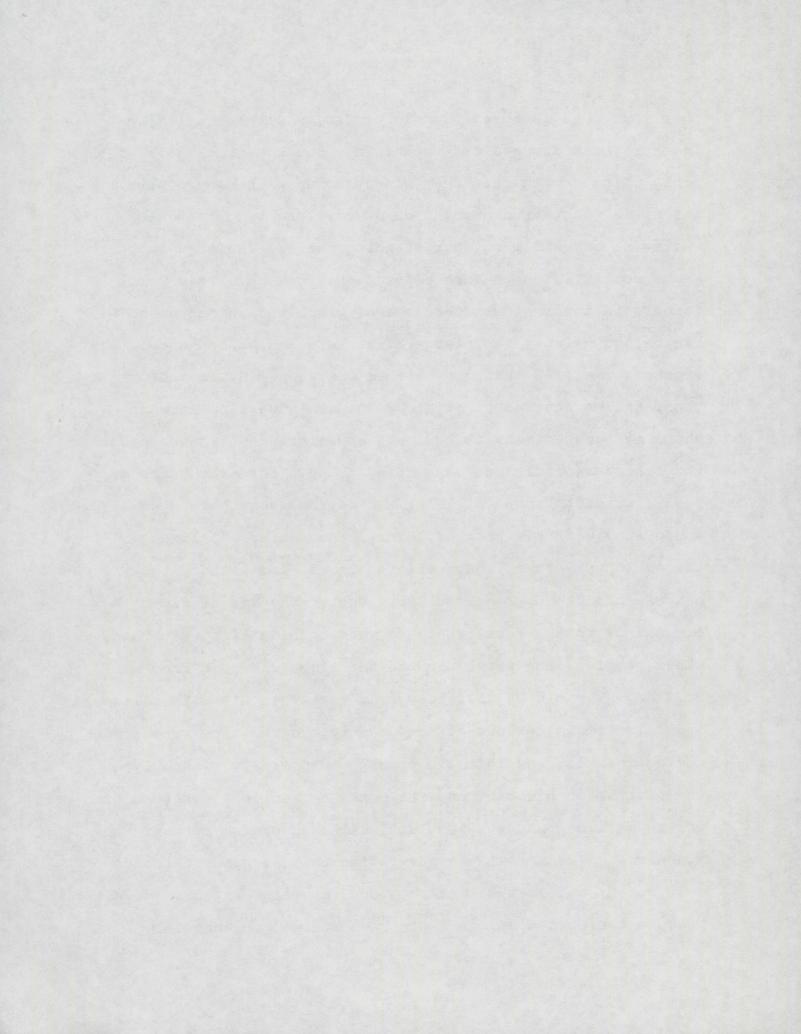
We waited and waited for my mother and sister, but they didn't come. My father was pacing the floor and peeking out the window. It was hours before they finally came. gone through a very difficult time. The three women had started walking equipped with scarfs on their heads and baskets with milk bottles on their arms. They walked through the field when, suddenly, one of the farmers stood up. had to decide whether they should continue or to go back. The guide insisted it was too late to return because the German soldier had seen them and was approaching. They started to talk to him, and my sister decided to flirt with the young soldier. He wanted to know why they were crossing the border. They told him that they had been in Holland to get milk. He wanted to see their papers. He finally told them to go but added " I would never let Jews go. " They were lucky that he was alone. They still had a long way to go and worried about meeting more Germans. It was a very dangerous crossing. Even though the Nazis were also occupying Belgium, they made sure no one would get out of Holland. If they had



caught us, that would have surely been the end for all of us. The Nazis routinely shot anyone trying to cross the border so we had to get away from that area as quickly as possible. We were now assigned to a new smuggler, again a woman who arrived at the farm house shortly after we did. She would quide us further into Belgium. First we had to get to the rail road station. The women went together; but since the woman and her helpers decided that my father looked too Jewish, they did not want him to go with us. Also the railroad station on that border was far too dangerous: so Papa went with the helpers. The train soon came, and this time we all got into the same compartment. The train just stood there and I wondered why we weren't moving. I was sitting near the window; and suddenly a big German truck appeared, and a whole group of Nazis jumped out guns in hand. Other autos with German officers soon arrived. As the Germans approached the train I was fingering the papers in my pocket. The compartment was opened from the platform side and a German demanded "papers". People were running through the train screaming trying to get away. We sat frozen. He looked at my card and handed it back to me. When he got to my sister, he didn't seem convinced. He looked at her and the picture, then at her, and again at the paper. She looked straight at him without any show of emotion. My mother was prepared to scream; the woman smuggler squeezed her hand very hard; then he threw the paper in Nanny's face and slammed the

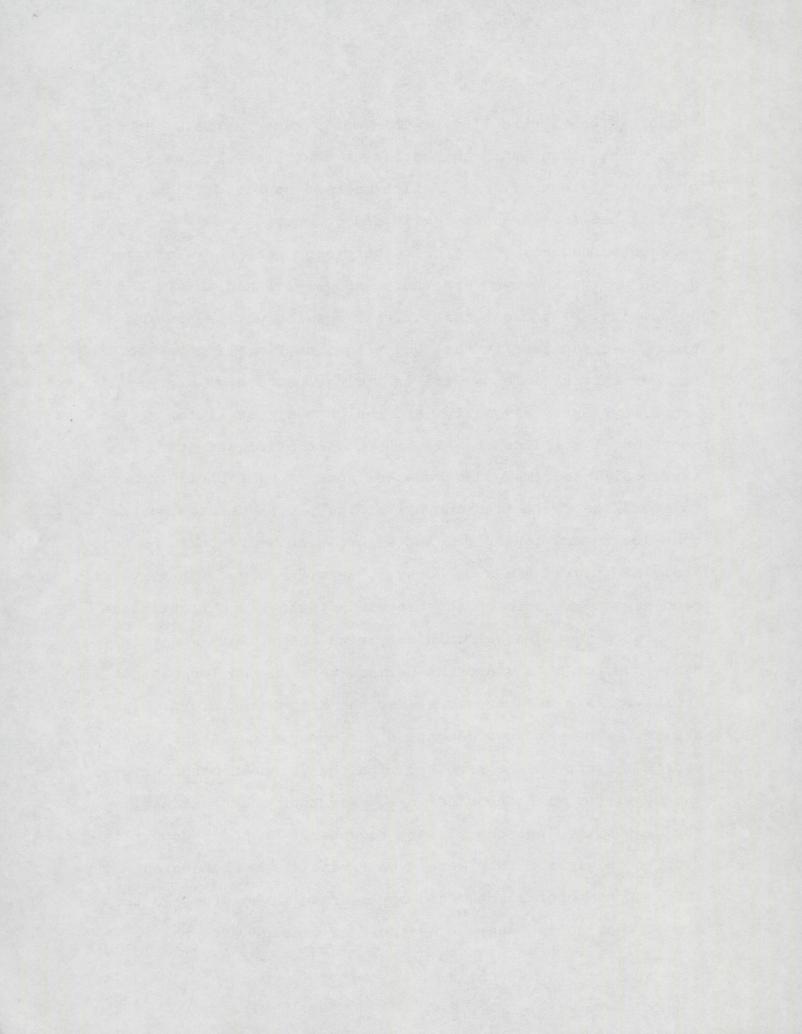


door shut. As I looked out the window, a little girl my age had just been dragged off the train. She had black hair with a big white bow in it. They lined her up with many others. The train started to move. For a very long time, no one spoke. I can still see her standing there. The next stop was a small village. Just a few people got on. They were farmers in their ethnic costumes of black woolen coats and big balloon-like pants, large black hats and wooden shoes. suddenly realized that one of them was Papa. He looked so funny and we started to giggle. The train went to Antwerp where my Dad had many friends and acquaintances. Antwerp was the other major diamond center in Europe. For many years my father tried to spend at least two days a week there. He would stay with his brother, Henry, and family who lived there. They were no longer living there, and we knew they had escaped the day the war broke out. The smugglers brought us to the house where we were to hide along with many other people. One was a man who had also just come from Holland. He told us that he was at work when his wife called and told him to get out of the country because they were coming for him. He left the country immediately with only the clothes on his back and the money he had in his safe. He was a small man and very Jewish looking according to Nazi standards. I don't like even writing this because it sounds so bigoted; but it was, indeed, very important in those days, because the German soldiers had been trained in what they



thought a Jew looked like. This man's name was Sal. He was very young, about 25; and he told us that his wife had just given birth to their baby, which made it doubly difficult that he had to leave his family and country. We were warned to be very quite not to go near the windows. No one was to know we were there, so we just had to sit and do nothing. I thought that if this was the way people in hiding had to live, it was something that I could never do. Some of my girl friends were in hiding, but I'd go crazy. I was always extremely active and couldn't sit still for very long; and I still can't. To have to sit still and stay inside all the time would be sheer agony. My father went out to see if he could find another hiding place for us. He was gone for a very long time, and we began to worry that the Nazis had picked him up. However, he did return with very good news. His friends the Hoepelmans, who lived right there in Antwerp, decided we could stay with them. This was very dangerous for them since the Germans were on the lookout for fugitives like us; never the less the Hoepelmans did give us. shelter. They had two daughters our age, and we shared the beds. I slept in the same bed with the youngest daughter, and my sister with the older one. Now that seems strange. Why didn't they put the sisters together? We had a good time with those girls. They were even living a somewhat normal life. The "deportations" had not started in Belgium and they

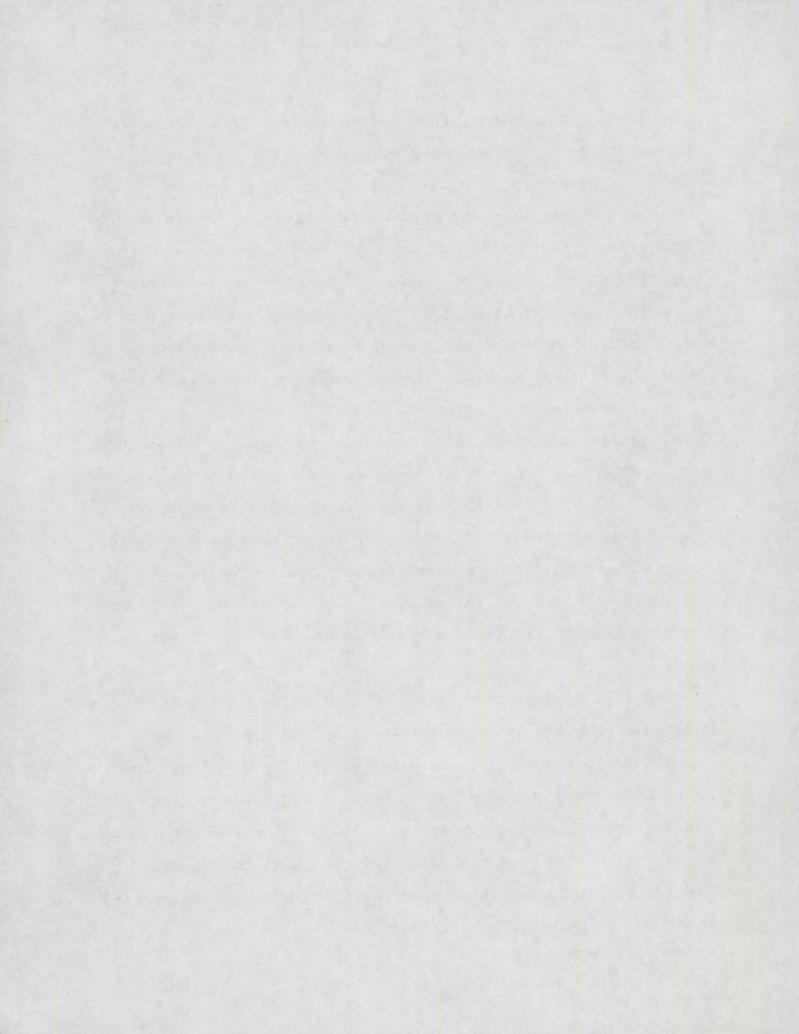
didn't wear Jewish stars. We could go outside with the



Hoepelman girls, doing things Jewish children were no longer allowed to do---such as going to the movies and ice cream parlors. We stayed with that family for three weeks.

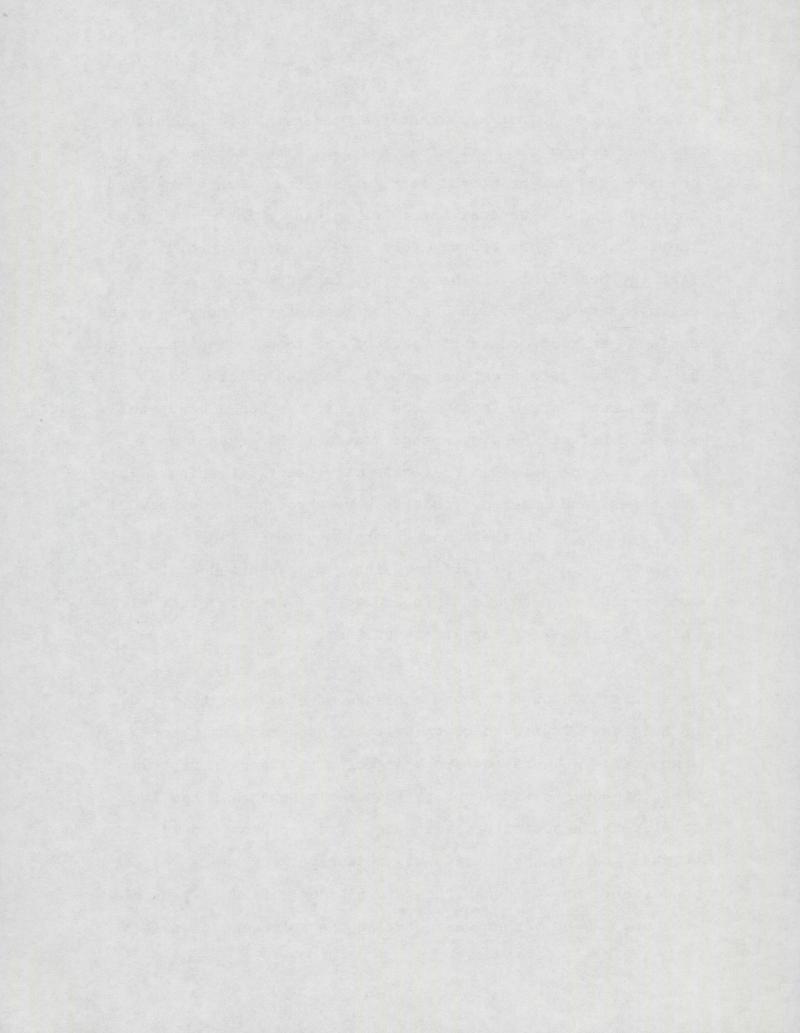
In the mean time, my parents were having a terrible time struggling to get us out of Belgium. The chain we were supposed to be part of had broken. The plan had been, that we were to go through Belgium to Switzerland. While crossing the border, a group of escapees who had just preceded us, had a baby with them; and, when a door was shut on the baby's finger her cries alerted the Germans who caught the group in the baggage compartment of a train. They were all taken out and shot on the spot. Therefore, we had to find a new way to proceed. I wish that I knew more of the details of how my parents discovered new connections for our escape. How could they be sure that it would be safe and that we would not be betrayed by those people who took our money and then hand us over to the Nazis? These horrors happened all the time!

[This is a good place to tell you that a few hours after we left Holland, the Germans came to arrest us. As you recall we did leave two days earlier than originally planned. The man, Mr. Maandag, who had helped my Dad find the smuggler had turned around immediately and told the Germans we were going to escape. This gave him extra favors. When the Nazis failed to catch us, there was an article in the newspapers that we had been caught and executed.

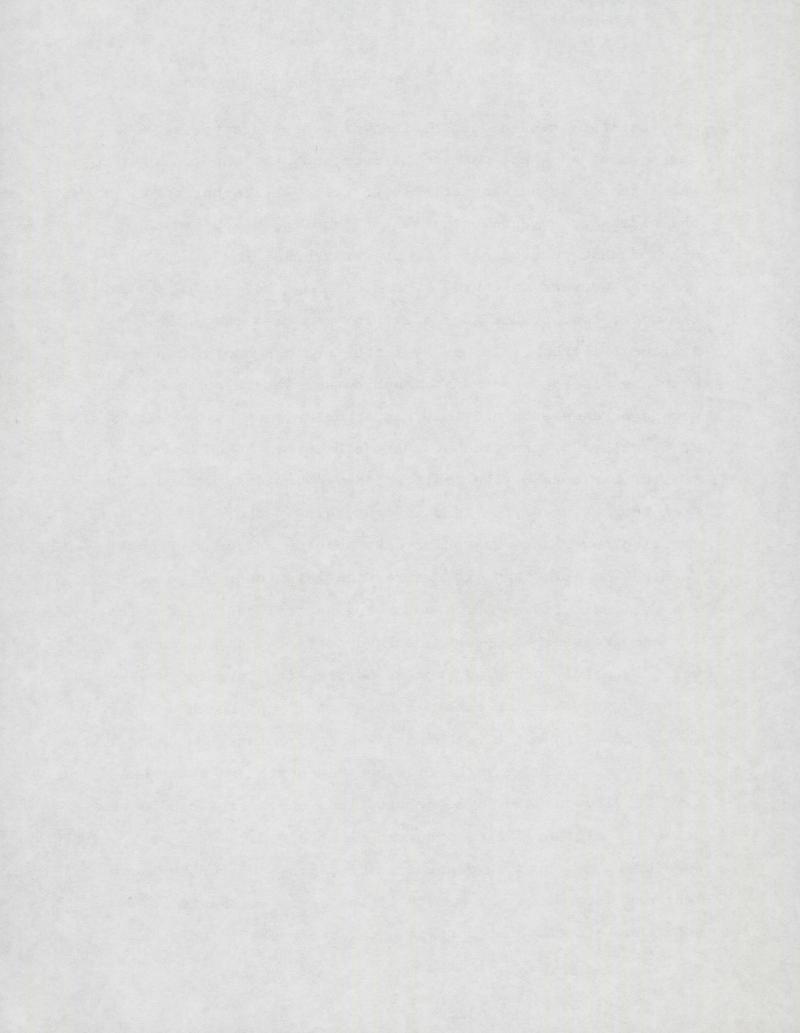


Of course we did not know that the Germans had "announced" they had caught us until after the war. The Gestapo commandeered our beautiful flat in Amsterdam with everything in it and a Nazi General moved in. Having spies right under their noses was, of course, terrible for our neighbors. Our flat was beautiful. My parents had furniture made a few years before by a well known modern designer. Everything was designed in rosewood to fit each of the rooms. The couch had brown velvet, linen upholstery with Persian pillows on it. Persian rugs were on the wooden floors. We had a beautiful rosewood buffet where my mother kept all the crystal and silver. My parents had collected many beautiful things, so paintings, and other art objects were throughout the house. In the living room there was a very large painting of my sister and 1. We sat for the painter my parents had hired, for months. I detested having to do it. We wore light blue velvet dresses with large lace collars.

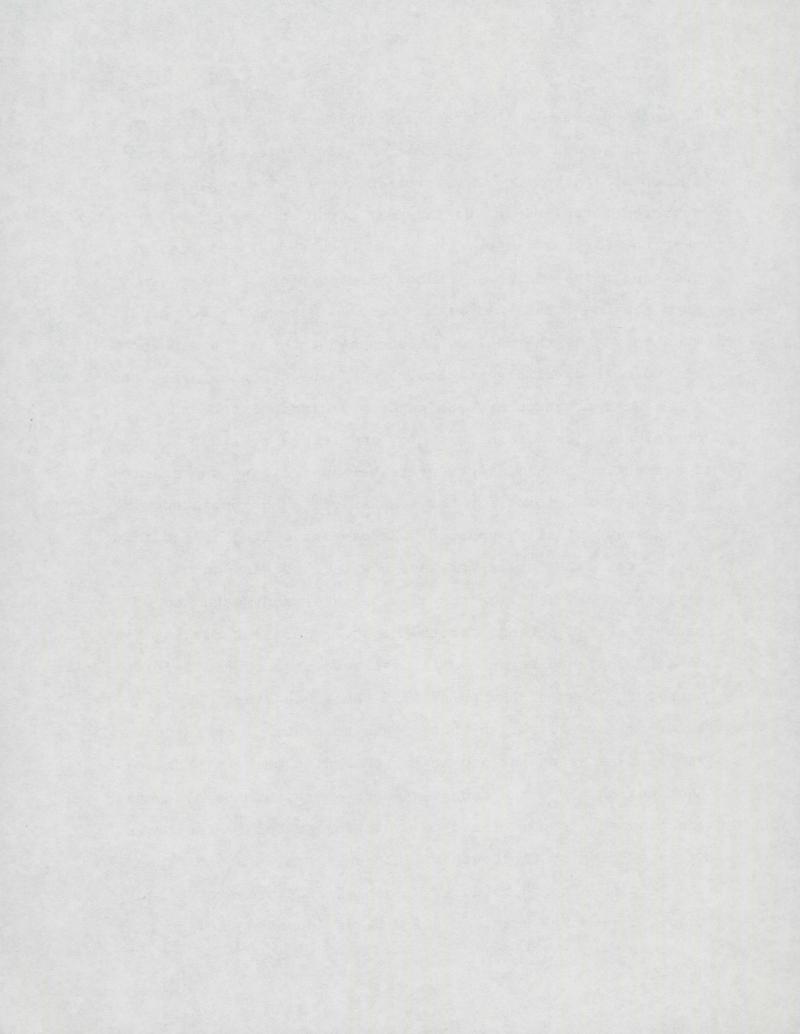
My father had found someone who knew of a new way to get out of Belgium. Trying to go to Switzerland was clearly too dangerous. We were advised that going to France first, was the best way; so Papa went to this man's house and had long complicated negotiations with him. The man promised my parents that he knew a safe way to escape; but there was one condition. We would have to take his son a fifteen year old with us. As my father was entering the apartment of this



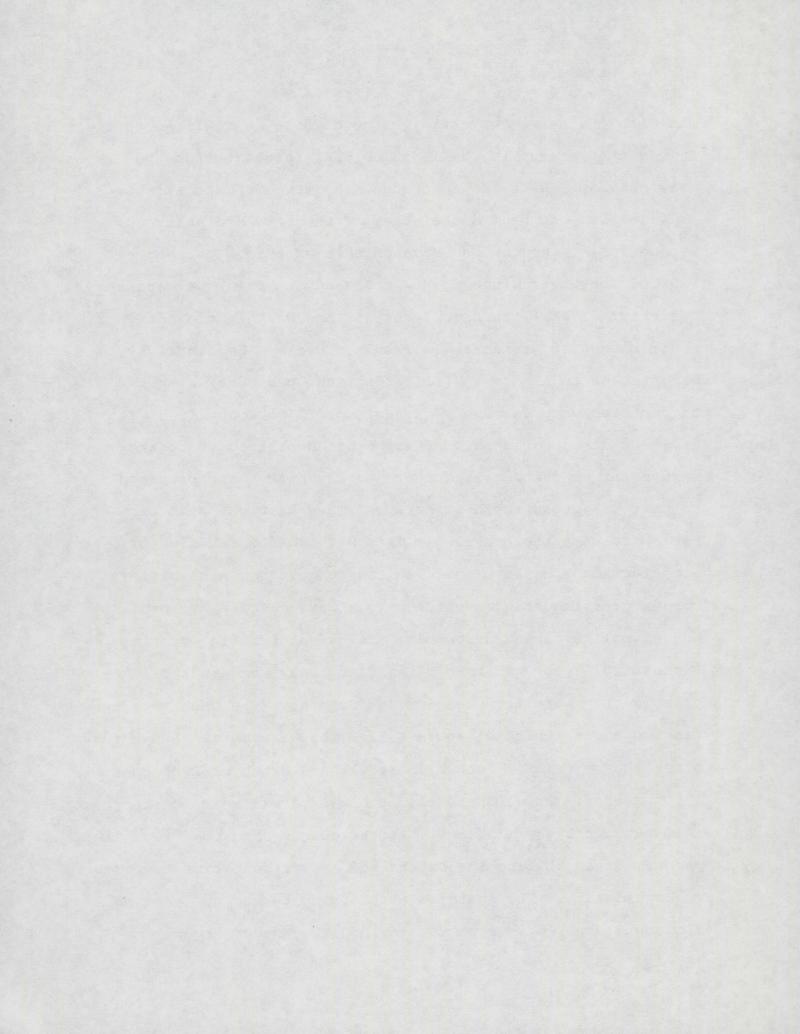
man, he saw a closed door behind which he heard voices. He demanded to know who was in the room, but the man insisted it was a secret so he was not able to tell. My father then made the necessary arrangements; but on leaving, he opened the door of that forbidden room. It was crucial for him to know. Were the Germans in there? Who could they be? As he opened the door, four people stared at him; and then they all started to scream. It was my father's old school friend with his wife and two sons. They too were there to make escape arrangements and they had actually seen my Dad arrive as he walked by the window. Barend Broekman asked his wife, "Could that possibly be Louis Grishaver who just walked by?" When Papa returned, he told us everything. There was an exciting new plan. We would leave Belgium and go to France. We might be able to go to Switzerland later once we were in France. Switzerland and Sweden were neutral countries. That for some reason the Germans decided not to occupy. France was only partly occupied; but as before, the border was very dangerous. We had to enter in the North. The North was part was occupied, but the South part was not. Since Southern France was still free, the line between North and South was very heavily guarded. The deportations and terror had become worse in Belgium. Raids occurred night and day, with many Jews being deported to concentration camps. We had to leave. Fear was with me, every minute of the day. We had to go soon and left the next morning after two weeks in Belgium.



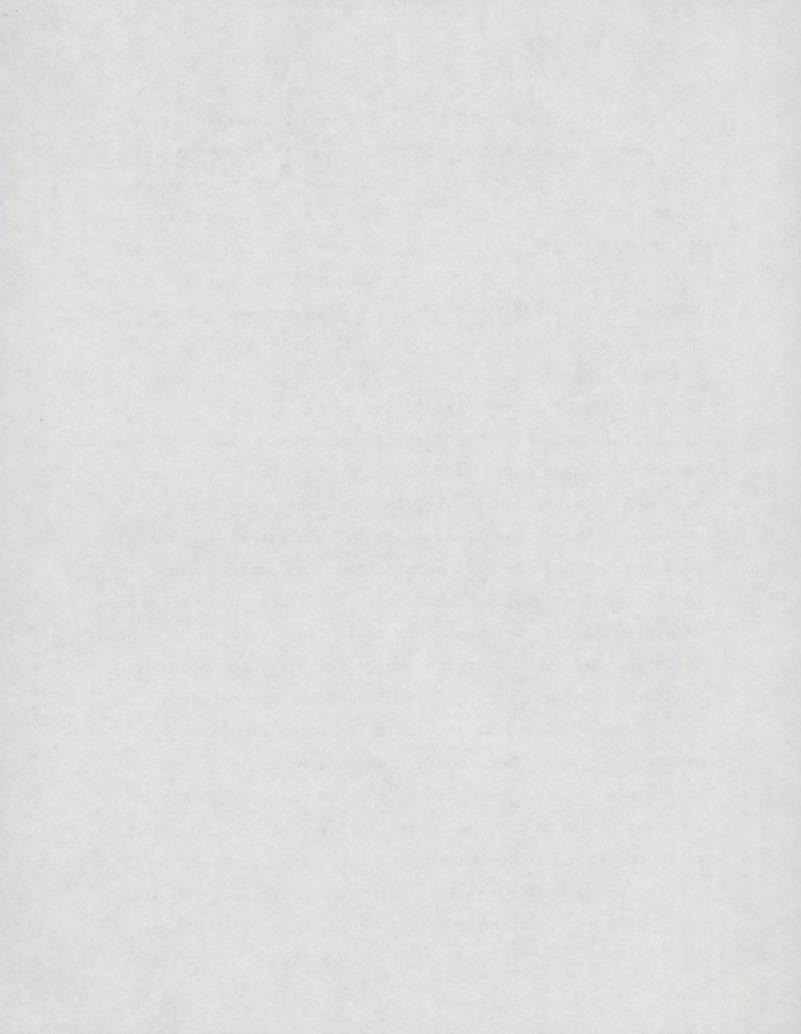
We made our way to the train station where we were to meet a "passeur" a man in a light colored raincoat (Passeur is a person who helps fugitives cross borders) The man we were supposed to follow in the raincoat never appeared, but we did meet the 15 year old boy who would go with us. Michael was the son of the man who arranged this portion of the journey. From now on Michael was with us and we were now five people. When they made the deal my parents had trusted the man who was to meet us at the station. He had been paid a great deal and seemed trustworthy. We were very disappointed and conspicuous just standing there, and it was terribly dangerous. The Nazis were everywhere patrolling the station area. After waiting for three hours past the appointed time, the passeur finally appeared. He came strolling by and said it was too late for us to leave now. There were no explanations! We'll go tomorrow he said; and we had to go back to the Hoepelmans for the night. There was nothing else to do. They had been terribly relieved that we had left; the danger for them of having us live there was over. We felt awful to have to return, but we had no other place to go. They put us up again, and the next morning we went back to the station. The man didn't show up again, but he did send a young woman. She motioned to us to follow her to the train. We were going to the south of Belgium where we would cross the Belgium -French border. We got off the train at a small town. The young woman got off with us and said "follow the



man with the beret on." After a short while we realized that it was the passeur in the light colored raincoat from the previous day. He took us through many streets, and alleys. As we walked one behind the other, with quite a distance between us, I thought how strange this must look to people looking out their window. How could anyone think we were not together? I still think of that bizarre walk it did not seem real; rather it was surreal like in a dream. He finally directed us to a house. [All along, the passeurs we encountered were extremely careful not to be identified with us.] He disappeared as soon as he had deposited us to the next point, two woman, a mother and daughter, were prepared to take us across the next border. They knew the best time for us to make the crossing. This was a different kind of crossing than the last one. We had to go through an official border crossing station which were always guarded by special border police during peace time and by soldiers in war time. I can't tell you what kind of soldiers they were, but I presume they were from Belgium and Germany. The daughter took my sister, Michael and myself. She was just a few years older than my sister, so we looked like a group of kids going out together. As we approached the patrol she said "smile at them but don't say a thing". As the guards checked our papers, I was shaking inside and had a difficult time keeping my hands still. The guard said something to me and I smiled although I had no idea what he said. They waved us on

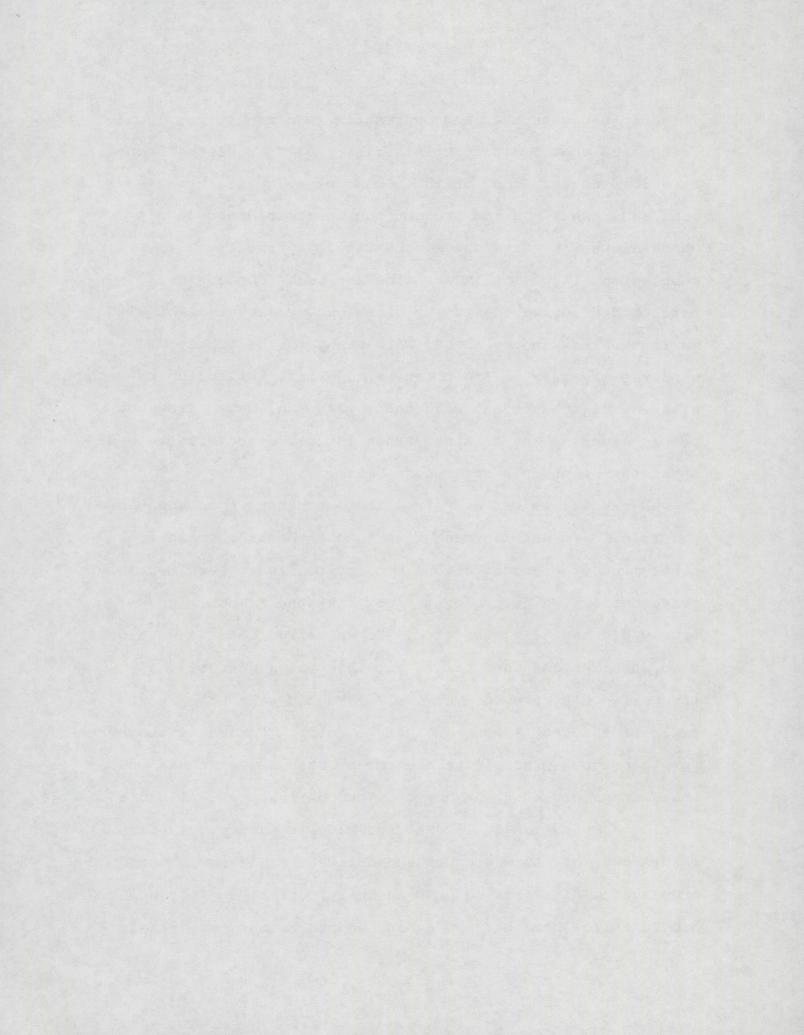


without any trouble. My father and mother were behind us accompanied by the woman. My mother got through, but when they looked at my father they said "Juif", Jew. My father grabbed his papers from the guards hands and started to run. We saw him coming towards us. The woman and the girl had left. He said, "run as fast as you can." He took off his hat and threw it in the bushes. He then removed his coat and gave it to my sister to wear. Finally he removed his Mom took his briefcase, and we ran. The reason he did this, of course, was to change his appearance. such a fast thinker. We heard our pursuers coming behind us. We found a large group of bushes and hid. They missed us although they kept searching for a long time. I stayed motionless the entire time. Luckily this was a very small border crossing, so there weren't too many guards. This was the reason the smugglers had chosen this particular crossing. We stayed hidden for many hours until darkness made it safe to leave. We were instructed to go to a certain house. Nanny and I were always informed about the future plans in case we were separated. It was not easy to find that particular house; but, somehow we managed to do so and they were expecting us. Our "hosts" took us upstairs to a very long hallway with many, many doors; and finally, they showed us to the room at the end of the hall. The room next to it was for Nanny and me to sleep in. I suddenly realized I was terribly hungry, not having eaten since the previous night.

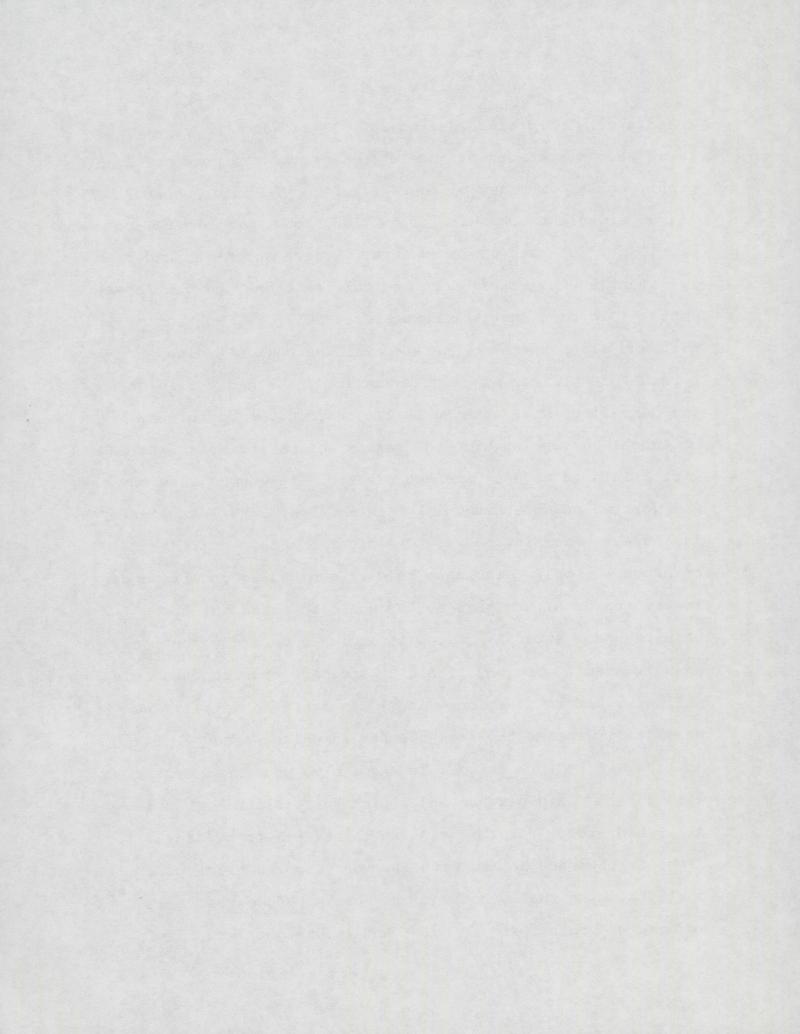


This had happened over and over again. So many times I was frightened that I didn't think of eating. "Our hosts" brought us a loaf of very long bread. I had never seen a bread so long and skinny. A man brought the unwraped bread in his hands along with some cheese and wine. By the time we gobbled up all of it, it was time for us to go to sleep. My parents did not want us to be alone, so my father slept with me in one room and my mother with Nanny in the other. I wondered why they wouldn't let us be alone. We couldn't sleep at all that night with doors slamming, beds creaking, people laughing and talking. Much later I discovered we had spent the night in a <u>real</u> whore house.

It was crucial we get away from that border town as soon as possible. It was too dangerous to use the trains and every other mode of transportation; and, of course we were terribly conspicuous. We just did not look like the French, and surely did not talk like them. So we walked a lot. We also rode on bikes and used taxis; yet this was a part of the escape I don't remember very well. We did take some short train rides; and, somehow we got to Paris. Paris was another very dangerous place in France for a Dutch Jew. It was where the Germans picked up anyone they thought suspect. I had a cousin, a young man of 18, who had made it safely this far, on his own; but he was apprehended in Paris and never heard from again. In Paris we made another "contact". Again we had to follow someone; and again, we had to move separately.

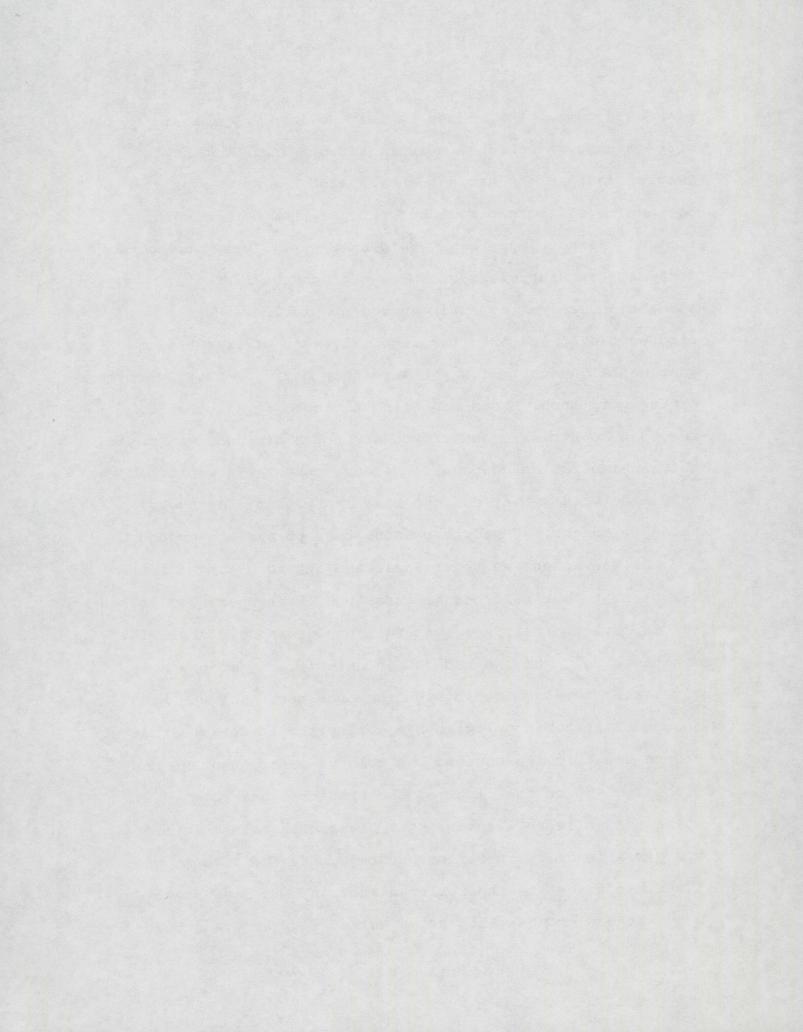


I had a very hard time keeping up. I was very small, and there were moments that I couldn't see over the heads of other people. The new passeur walked too fast for us and stayed a whole block ahead of us. He, too, was careful and cautious. We ended up in an empty garage, which was under an apartment house. It was damp and cold in there and completely empty. Old cars and junk were stored outside. We had to hide and sleep there for three days. We couldn't sleep because of our fear of being discovered. We had to lie on the bare floor with nothing to lie on or cover ourselves. One night someone outside the garage was making noise and we were afraid to move or even to breathe. It seemed some one was working on something, like fixing a car. He left finally in the early morning hours. One night I had to go to the bathroom so badly I couldn't hold it and had to go like a dog in the corner of the garage. We would be taken out to urinate under supervision one at a time once a day, but only when it seemed safe. My father's briefcase provided the only pillow we had to sleep on-- and I was lucky to get it! We were still wearing the same clothes in which we had left Holland. I had one dress. It was a blue wool knit dress with a pink plaid pattern and a pink knit collar. That is all I had except for the beads which never left my body. I slept in them and bathed with them on. Come to think of it, I don't think we really bathed. We just washed ourselves as best we could. It was July, and it can get very hot in



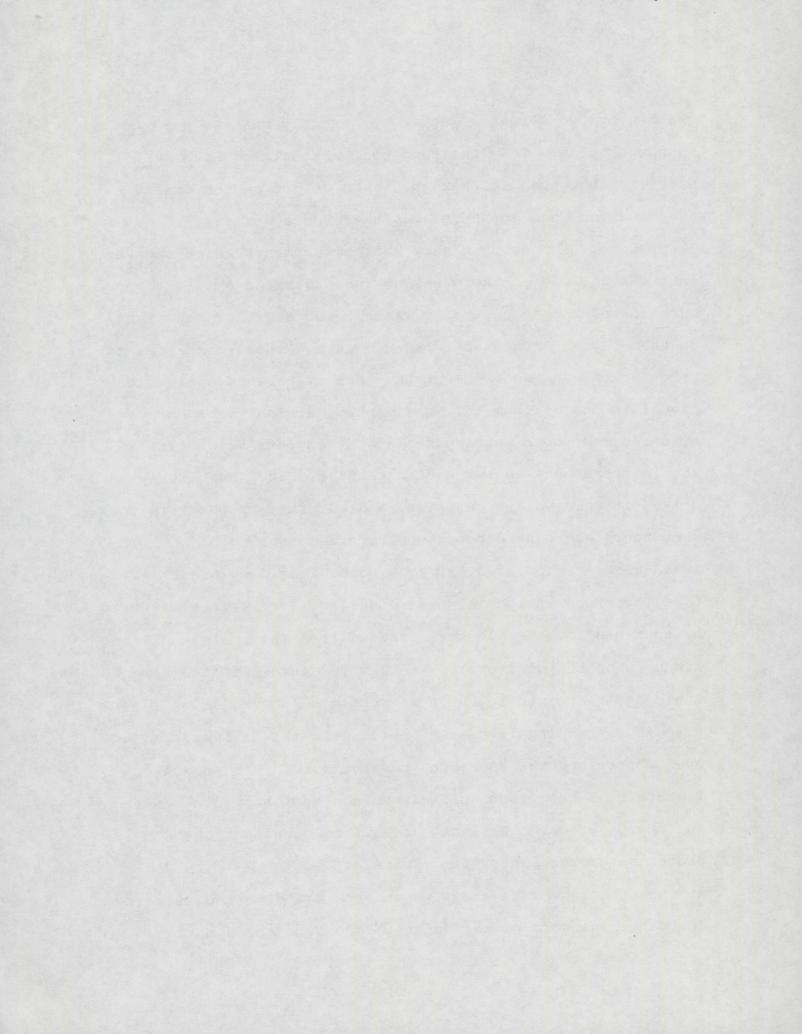
France in summertime. When we left Holland, my mother worried that we would be cold in our original destination Switzerland; so she had not anticipated the warmer places in between. Yet I can't remember being either hot or cold; it just was not important. We didn't worry very much about washing or having clean clothes. It was the last thing we thought about just as eating posed no problem. Most of the time we didn't eat or drink regularly; and after a while I just wasn't hungry. I was a very thin girl and never enjoyed eating very much. Food was being rationed in all the European countries; and if you are not a citizen, you could not receive ration coupons. What are those? We would get only a certain amount of food each month; and, for every thing we bought, we had to present the appropriate coupon.

It was urgent we leave Paris and get to Dijon. Dijon was close to our next border crossing. Everywhere one looked it was obvious that Paris was full of German soldiers. The man named Sal, whom we had met in Antwerp, was at the same time, also being guided by the same passeur. Sal was kind enough to keep Michael with him during the three days that we had to sleep in the garage. He told us later, that he and Michael slept on the floor of the Passeur's one room apartment while the latter spent his nights making love to his girlfriend. To begin our next journey (to Dijon), we first had to get to the railroad station. We made it to Gare Lyon without trouble; but as we walked in, Nanny was suddenly



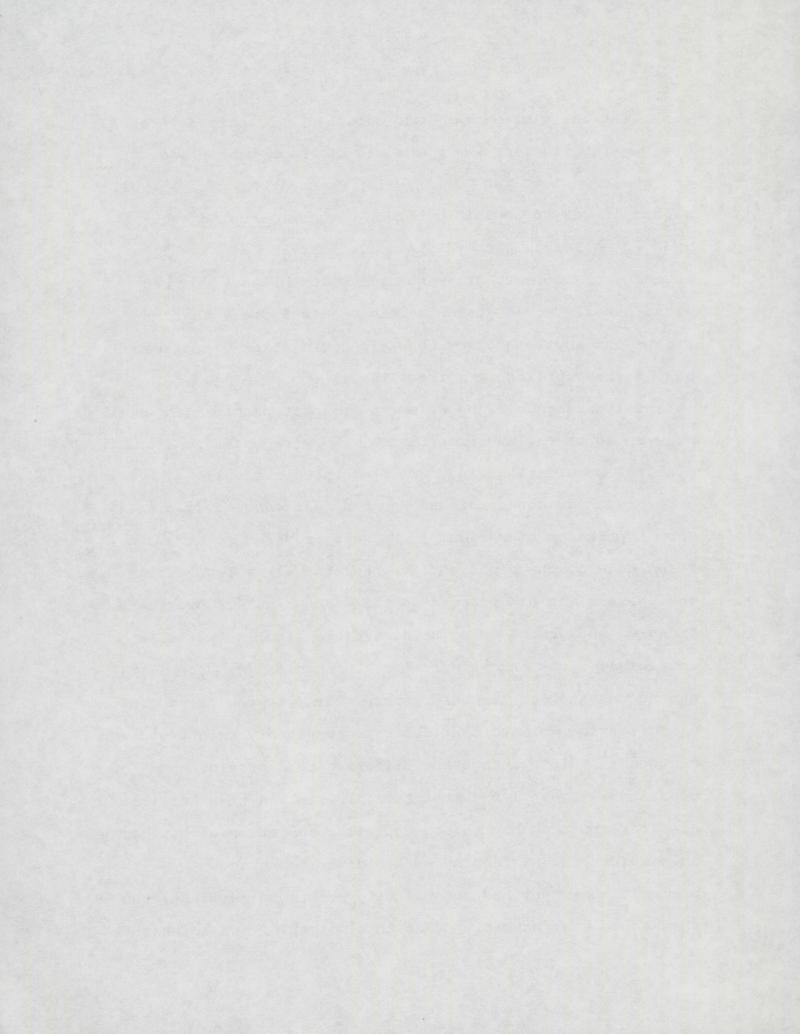
grabbed by two Germans. We froze, exactly what we were not supposed to do. They searched her, what seemed like an eternity, but then let her go. When we got on the train, there was no room anywhere, but there were Germans everywhere. Those train cars had compartments which open up into the hallway so there was no room to stand or sit. curtains of the compartments were closed and they had signs on them saying "reserved". We recognized those compartments were for the Gestapo. Never the less my parents decided to peek into one of them. It was empty, waiting to be occupied by uniformed, boot-wearing Nazis. My parents said, "let's sit in there" anyway. I couldn't believe it. We quickly walked in, closed the curtains, and sat there. The trip took many hours and many depot stops before we got to Dijon. train was searched at every stop, and, I held my breath every time the train stopped always wondering if this time we would be apprehended. People were dragged from the train and being lined up on the platforms. We knew for sure that the same would have happened to us if we were not in our "safe" place but standing like everyone else in the hallway. No one ever approached the "Gestapo" compartment. This sounds fantastic, I know, but unlikely things kept happening over and over. It was both luck, as well as cunning that protected us throughout our escape.

At this point we were about to undertake the most difficult and dangerous part of our journey: crossing the demarcation

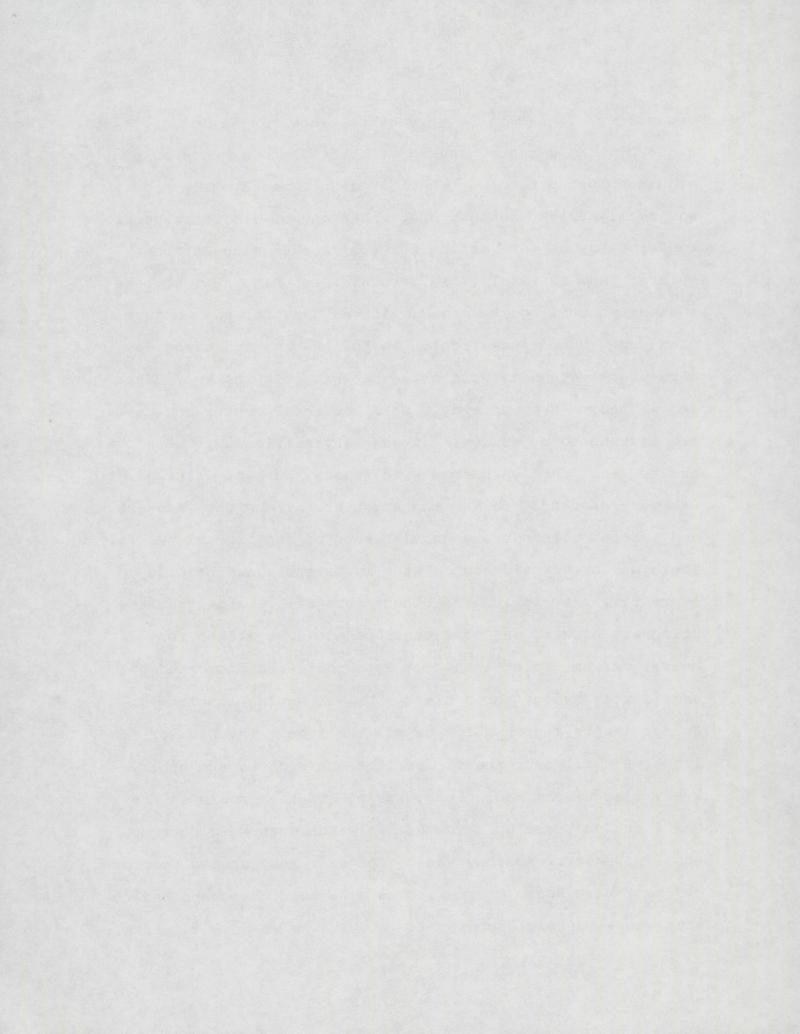


line. At the time Germany had occupied only half of France. The demarcation line was where the division took place. One can compare it to the Berlin Wall, except there was no wall; rather it was an invisible border between occupied and unoccupied France that was patrolled day and night. It seemed impossible to cross the miles and miles of barbed wire, heavily armed guards, vicious patrol dogs, search lights and anything else the Nazis could think of to keep people from getting into free France.

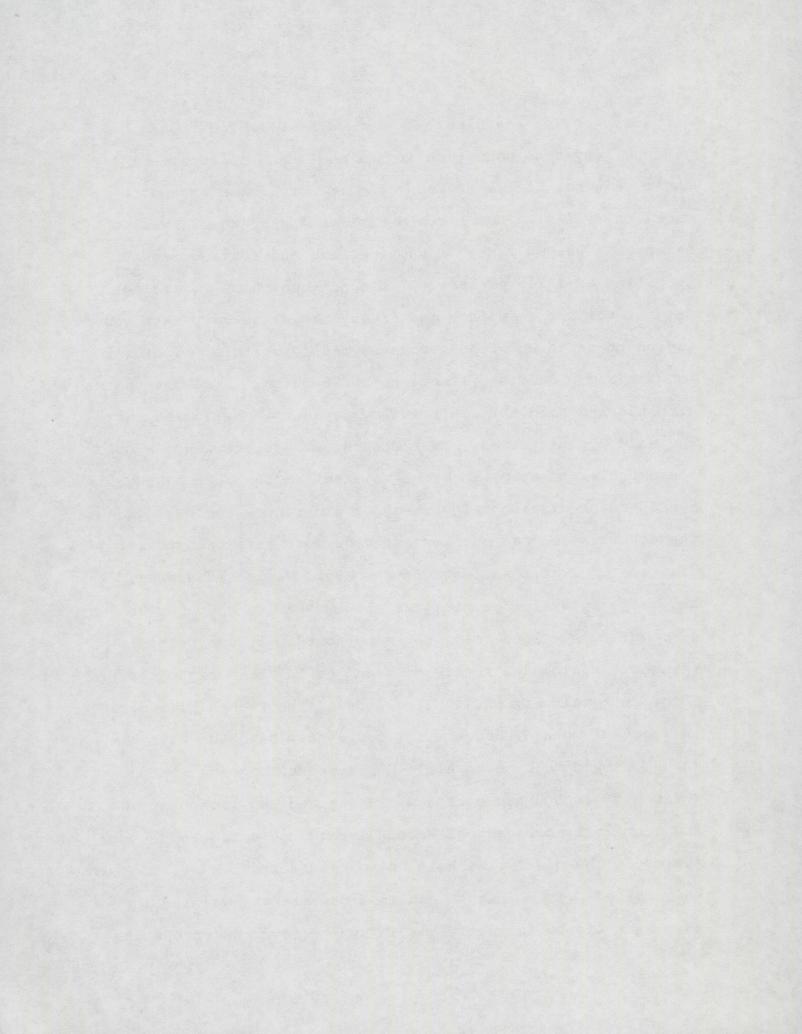
In a restaurant in Dijon we met a group of people with whom we were to cross into Free France. We were taken to a shed near the Demarcation line. Thirteen people in all. Two men were French prisoners of war who had just escaped from a German prisoner of war camp. We were prepared to start in the middle of the night and then had to walk a few hours. The passeur who had brought us this far handed us over to a smuggler who was to bring us across the line; he was also completely drunk and we were stuck with him. He soon left, and no one knew if he would return. This was the first time since leaving Holland that I became completely frightened and nervous . It felt altogether different than previous crossings. Again I had that terrible feeling of a horrible disaster about to happen and a panicky sensation of not being able to breath. I told my mother of my fears and premonitions; they had become believers in my feelings, but what could they possibly do at this point? I had to whisper



because we all had to be very quite since the Nazis were very close by. My parents assured me that all this would be over soon and turn out to be fine. It didn't really help and it was really spooky in that shed. Not one of all those people spoke; everyone was waiting for the drunken smuggler to return; and he finally did return at two A.M. He was bare footed and still quite drunk. It was hard for him to just stand up. He motioned for us to follow him; and since we were stuck with him, we started to walk. It was very dark and we had to cross fields. This was farm country and the mud came up to my ankles. It was very difficult to walk. We had to crawl through barbed wire fences, we kept walking. was very difficult to see the smuggler. I was the youngest and fastest person there and in front of the line of people. There was a very old couple whom my parents were helping up every time they fell. The others were Sal, Michael and the prisoners of war, and some other people. We walked for hours. At one point I told my Papa that we had crossed the same little bridge three times. We were going in circles. Search lights searched for us all the time. The beam of light went all over the fields from one side to the other. Every time a beam came close, we fell to the ground so the Nazis couldn't see us. The German watch dogs were barking, and I was convinced they would find us. They seemed so close and must have heard or smelled us. We kept going and had no idea where we were supposed to go. It was so dark, I had a

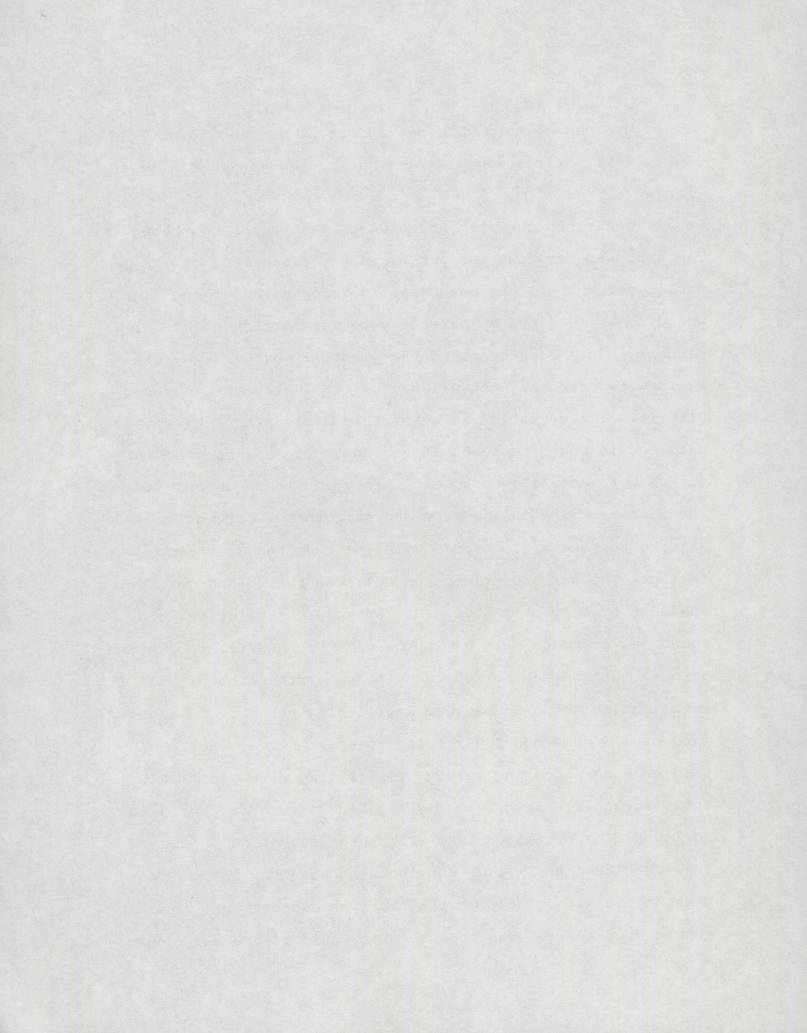


hard time seeing anything. I kept walking behind the passeur. My shoe got stuck in the mud, and I lost it. I can't remember if I ever recovered it. I looked around to check on my family but I could not see any of them. Was it because it was so dark? I kept walking and looking around, stumbling as I looked back. I did not see them. I did see Sal not too far away from me. Everyone walked very fast and trying to catch up with someone seemed impossible. I didn't know this man Sal, but I knew he spoke Dutch. I caught up with him and said, "I can't see my parents". He looked back and said I can't either. His French was perfect, and he told the smuggler to stop, in order to check on the people who seemed to be missing. The smuggler ordered us to look for the others. You can see how crazy he must have been to act like that. I just sat down in the mud. We looked around; and, after a while, we realized that we had to go on or be discovered. We kept going for many hours. At one point I thought I would have to lie down and go to sleep right there; I couldn't walk any more. I saw one of the French prisoners in front of me and thought if I could only catch up with him, maybe I could hold on to him. He seemed so big and strong. I finally grabbed his backpack. He turned and looked at me and in my very best school French I said "je suis tres fatigee". He did let me hold on to his pack as we walked. We came to a river where a man in a rowboat was waiting for us. He motioned for us to get in and he rowed us across the



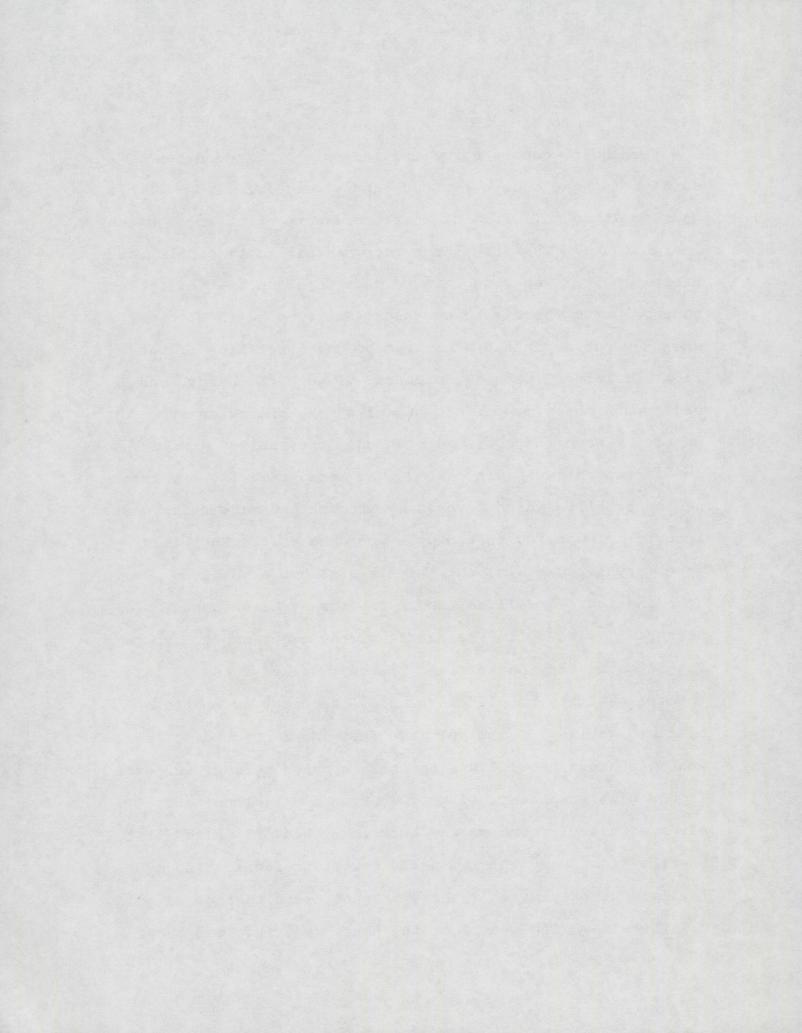
river. We had to keep walking, and as it started to get light, we finally reached a farm house--AND We were in free France.

We all went into the farm house where many people gathered. The smuggler sat down and put his dirty black feet on the table, something I had never seen before and something I would never do since my parents were very strict about our manners. As I looked around the place, I wondered why the walls were so black. It was because the walls were covered with flies. It really was a horribly dirty place. We were told to sit down at the table and they put some food on it; but we were not allowed to eat, since the food was only for the passeur. Someone came in and said that a car was outside waiting to take us to Lyon. By us, I mean the Grishaver family. The car and driver had all been rented and paid for ahead of time by my father. Sal spoke with the driver and found he was to go with us in the same car. He came back and told me that we had to get ready to go further, but I said I wasn't going to do so because if I did my parents would never find me. I demanded I was going to stay where I was. said he understood and said, " I will stay with you." A total stranger; and he was risking his life to stay with me so I would be protected from all those disgusting people in the smugglers' den. I am convinced he saved my life. My parents had always told me that if I should ever get lost, I should stay where I was because that would be the very best



way for them to find me.

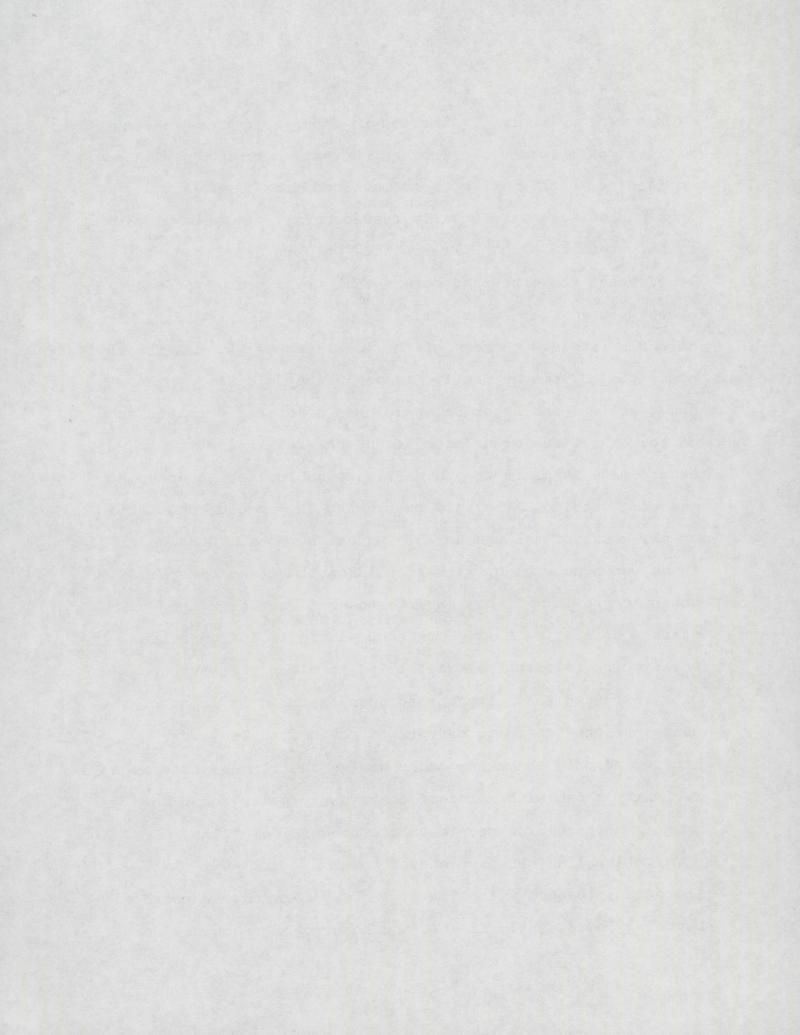
The farm house consisted of the room with the round table, a small telephone room a kitchen, and a very large room with a bedroom attached. I think that there were other rooms which I didn't see. The very large room had all sorts of billiard tables in it. The smugglers told us to sleep in the little bedroom where there were two beds. Sal slept with Michael, and they put me in the other bed on the other side of the room. I refused to get undressed. I wore the beads, and I had French money my parents had given me, pinned on my panties. When they gave me the money they said " just in case." and this was "in case". The money came in very large, new paper bills which covered my stomach and made noise when I moved. I worried that people would hear it. The bills were very large bills, not only in size but also in denomination. I fell asleep crying for my parents and sister. I woke up in the middle of the night and got up to see if maybe they had arrived. When I walked into the large room, I saw many people sleeping on the floor or on the billiard tables. I couldn't see anything I started to feel what was around me. I was touching a naked person! Whoever it was didn't wake up. I kept looking and feeling; and, after a while I found my way back to my bed. I waited till I saw the light come up; and again I kept trying to find my family, but they weren't there. People were coming and going all the time. The owners of the house made it clear they



didn't want us there. Sal tried to explain to them we were waiting for my parents. They neither cared or where willing to feed us. Sal's attempts to buy food from them with American dollars were equally unsuccessful. We were afraid to show them my "big" bills because we were convinced they would steal the money and harm me. I never told even Sal about my beads.

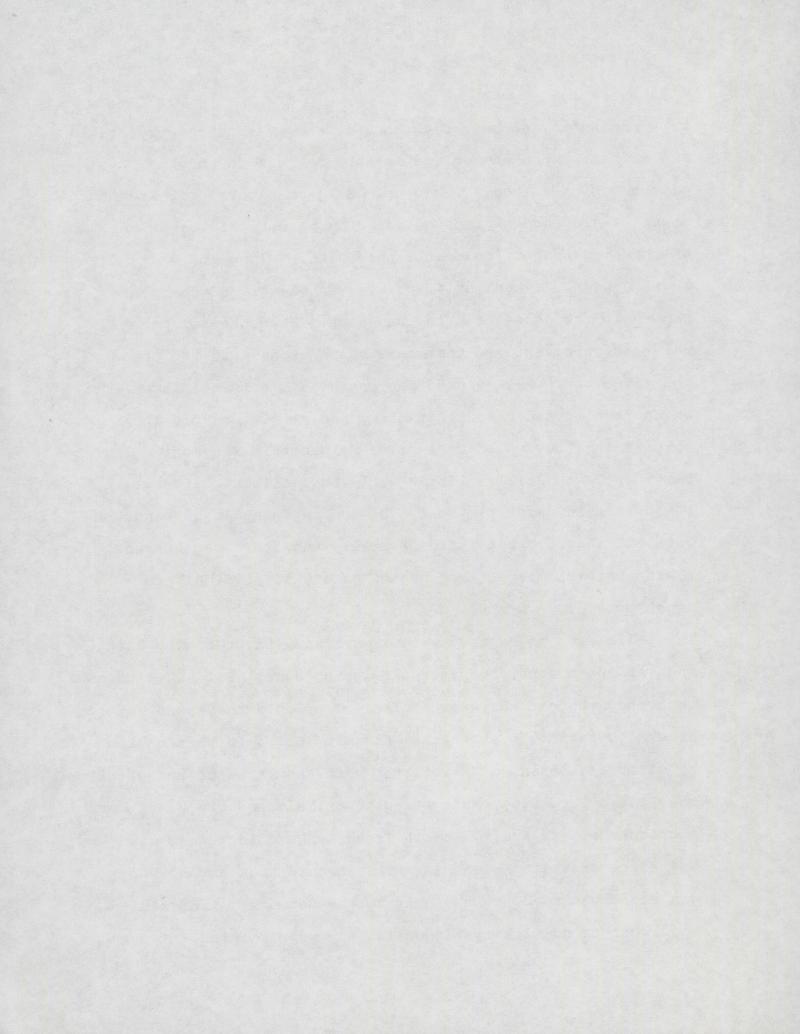
He had arranged with some of the local people who came to the house to look for my family. Somehow they did seem to know about dollars and after Sal paid them a lot had promised to do so. The three of us hung around the farm house. owners made it plain they didn't want us inside, so we spent our time outside. They did everything they could to get rid of us, worst of all was not giving us any food. Outside there was a baby buggy with a child in it but no one paid attention to it. I love babies and so I went over and started to play with it. The baby was full of fly-covered sores which revolted me, so I tried to clean the baby up a bit. I pushed the buggy up and down the road in front of the house; no one seemed to care or to notice us. They were interested only in making money having their house used as a rest stop along with a lot of other hanky-panky going on there. Helping hide people on the other side of the demarcation line was just one of them.

Another day passed without a sign of my parents. We were becoming increasingly frantic and hungry. French police



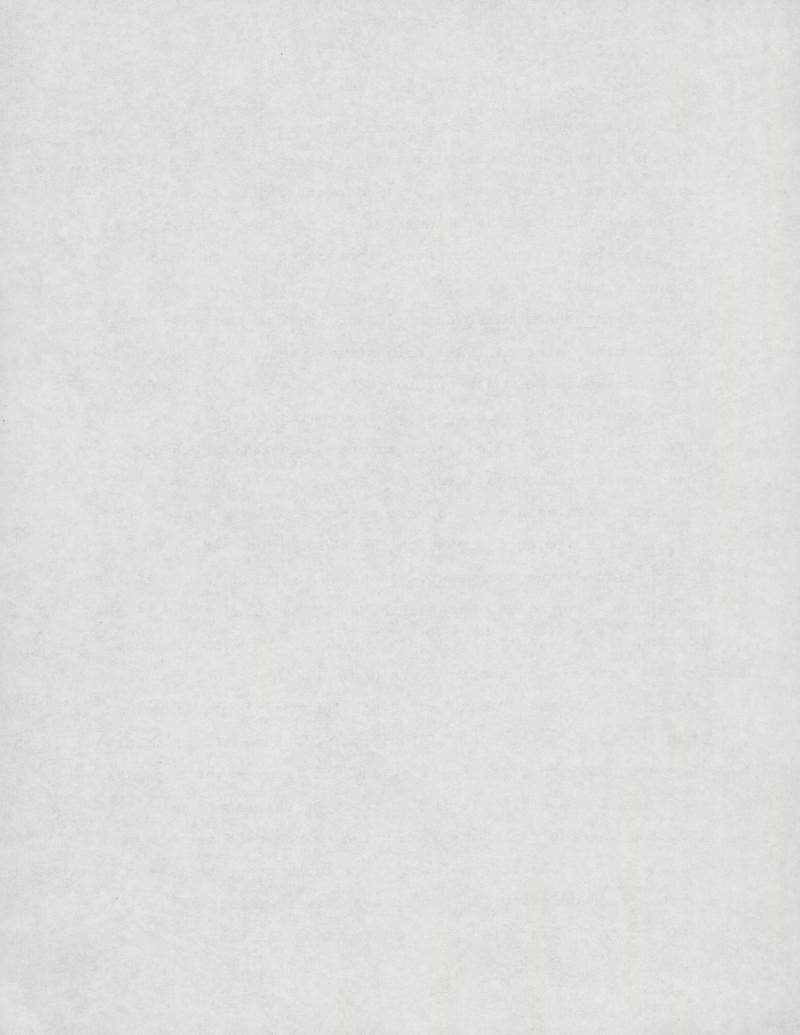
kept coming in and out of the house, and I started worrying about that. When the police left, I decided to bury my papers behind a shed. I had only Belgium papers, not French I also had a piece of paper my parents had given me which demonstrated (in case I needed help along the way) that I was Jewish. I had, at first, very foolishly hidden my papers in the phone book in the booth. When the police returned, they entered that same booth along with the woman who lived there. They used the booth as a private place in which to plan and make their dirty deals. I was sure the first thing they would do is find my papers. You must remember I was still a little girl who realized that now I had to take care of myself. Of course I should have spoken with Sal about it but I didn't really know this man who was taking care of me. It had become painfully difficult to trust people.

The police (or maybe they were French army) kept coming back; and, at one moment, they actually grabbed me. Sal asked them what they thought they were doing. They said they were under orders to turn me over to the Germans. Sal told them to let go of me and began to "negotiate" with them. He talked with them for a long time, attempting to bribe them with his American dollars and my French francs. He told them I was his niece traveling with him. They argued that anyone who was alone was to be turned over to the Germans. I didn't know what to do with myself while they were talking. I was



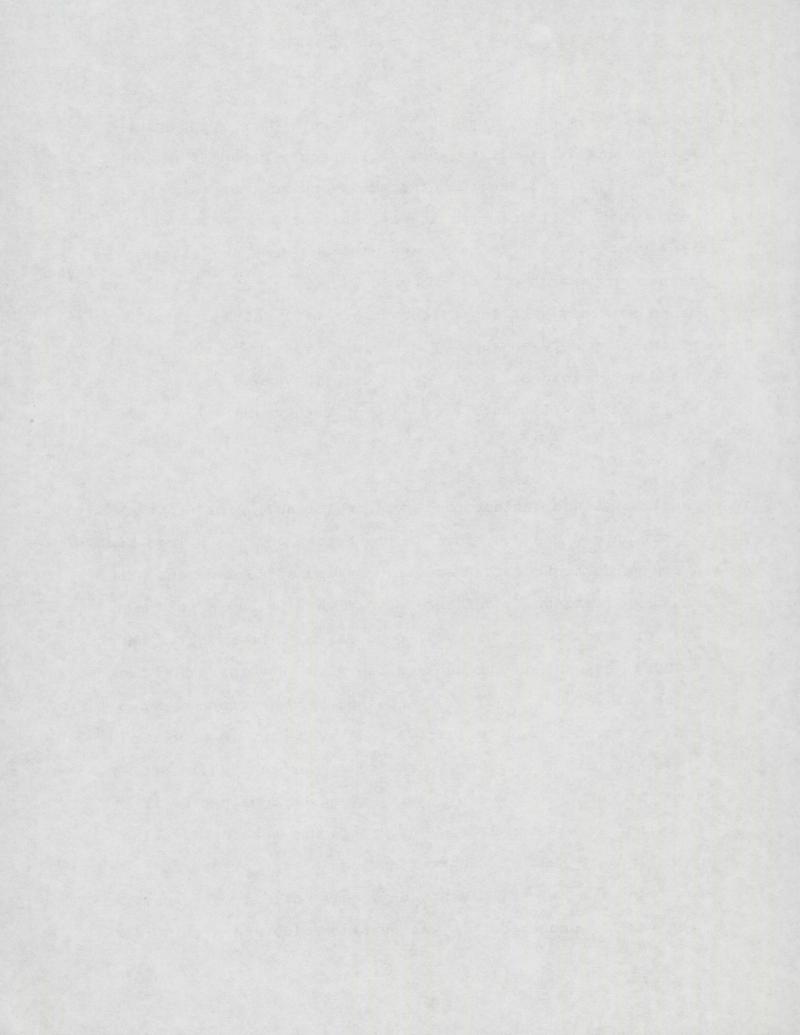
frightened they were going to grab me again, but there was no obvious chance of my running away. I knew that I had to stay. I felt totally helpless. I pretended to be asleep on a bench outside the farmhouse. I saw they were done talking to Sal; they walked towards me, kept going past me--and disappeared!

After being there three days without food, we were (as you can imagine) starved. Sal told Michael and me to hide behind the barn while he would try to get us some food. He went from farm to farm begging to buy something for us to eat. There was plenty of food, but no one would sell anything to him. Neither did they trust his few remaining dollars either. When he arrived at about the tenth farm house, he smelled and saw eggs frying on the stove, just before the woman slammed the door shut. As he was walking away, the woman was leaving the house through her backdoor to go to the outhouse. Sal ran back, opened the door, and with his bare hands, took the eggs out of the pan. He came running down the road. He said "look kids, what I have for you." He had put the eggs in the pocket of his only jacket. It is amazing how wonderful they tasted, lint and all. It was getting dark now, and I was still sitting in front of the farm house looking towards the place from which we had come three days earlier. For three days I sat there looking out on that empty road wondering if I would ever see my family again. Off and on I also cried most of the time. At times, I

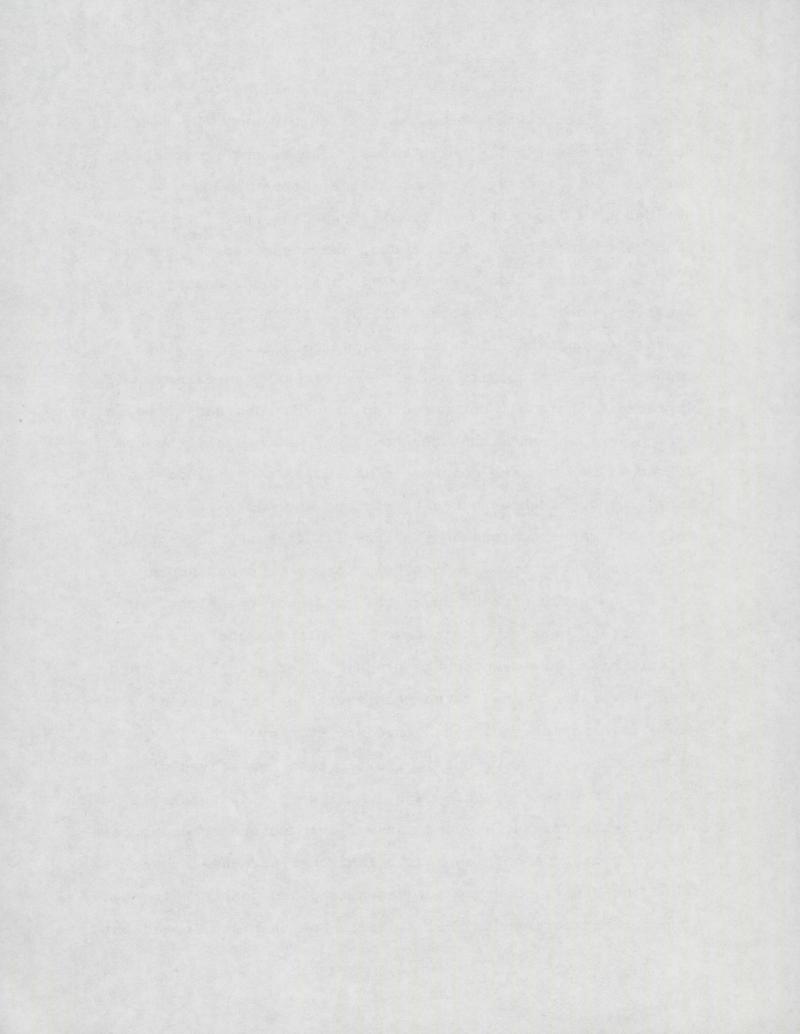


thought I saw something in the distance. Once again at dusk when it was difficult to see, I glimpsed a group of people. Was I imagining it again? I started out towards them. They came closer. It was, yes it was, my family. I can still feel what it was like to see my Papa and Mama and sister. We rushed up to each other. They could hardly believe they had found me; they were amazed and so grateful Sal had taken care of me; they were so happy I was fine. They were surprised I had never told Sal about my beads. They told us their story, and I will quote from what my mother wrote some time ago.

"At last we went on our perilous enterprise. Right at the start, an old man got stuck in the thick mud. We helped him. A few yards further the same thing happened to a woman. The mud came right up to our ankles. It was a heavy sticky mud, and for seven long hours we had to march. The smuggler never stopped, he went on through barbed wire, never looking back to see if we would follow. We passed through green meadows and we came across deep furrows made by carts. A number of times, we fell down, but we crawled on our feet again and stuck it out. Once again I fell; my husband helped me to my feet, but it was too late. The others had gone on, leaving us behind. My eldest daughter and one of the prisoners remained with us. We did not dare call out; it would have been far too dangerous. It was getting cold, and a thin rain



came drizzling down. Where was my little Jenny? We remained on the same spot till four o'clock. The French prisoner of war put heart into us. He was a fine, brave fellow. decided to follow the cart tracks, trusting that they might lead us to some farm. And it did, and it proved to have been the right thing to do. We crawled into a shed, and my eldest daughter, who had been wonderful, did all she could to console my husband. I felt too dazed to realize that my Jenny was no longer with us. At six o'clock the farmers wife appeared. She could not put us up; her husband had killed a German, and she knew that the house was watched all the time. We begged her and she pointed to me and said, "I'll do it for her." I thought about our close friend who was a very religious man and blessed me before I left home. One of the prisoners of war tried to get help for us to cross during the night. He would pick us up in the middle of the night. We had to stand near a certain tree and whistle, and he would whistle back. We went to the place. After a while we heard a faint whistle. One of the people with us, an older man, was afraid to make noise and tried to stop my husband. My husband did it anyway, but it was too late. We stayed with the farmers wife for three days, until we found, thanks to our prisoner friend, a young passeur, who conducted us across the line; it took only an hour. In the village nearby we found our Jenny. She had not eaten, and had done nothing but weep for her parents and her sister. How thin she looked but



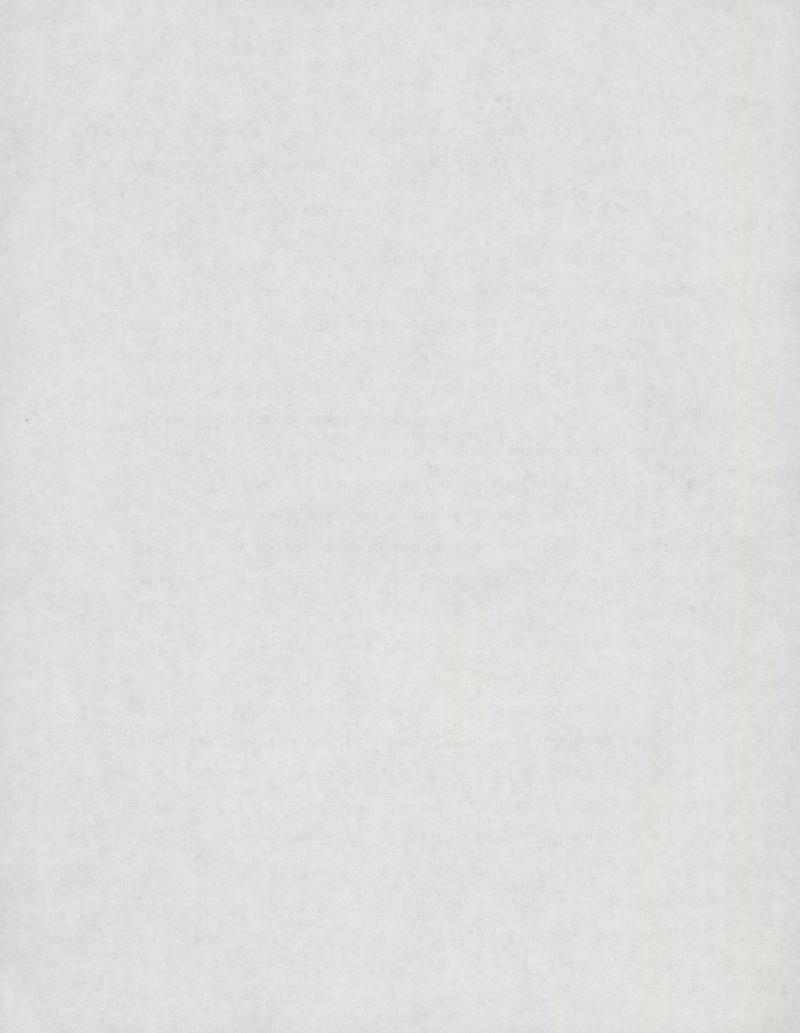
what a joy to have her in my arms again. Were we the same people who had led such a nice quiet life in our home near the Amstel river?"

I remember some more details my parents told me about that stay with the French farmer's wife. Every time they heard people come close to the barn or saw someone coming on the land they all hid. Later we found out that these were the same people who Sal had sent to find my family. The farmer's wife had a little girl who kept crawling into my fathers lap because she missed her daddy so. The woman was wonderful to them and gave them plenty to eat.

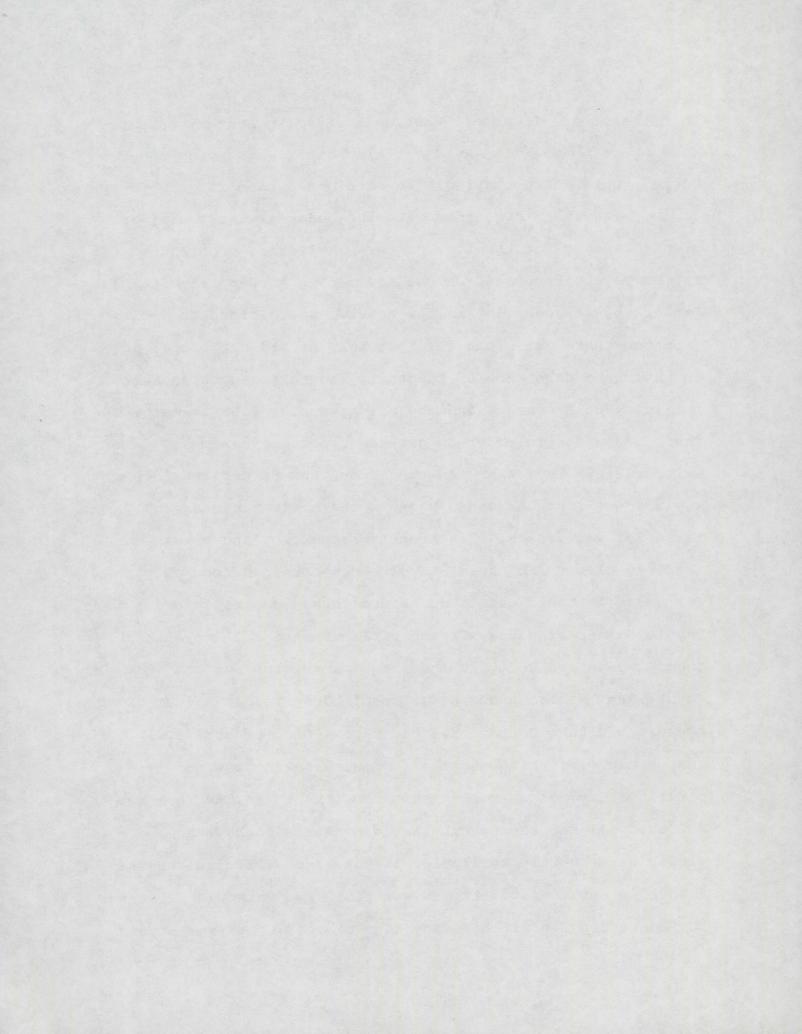
After the war many many years later my mother and sister while on a driving trip through France, tried to find her and thank her. They never found either the farm or the farmers wife.

The next day we hired a car and driver to go to Lyon.

We were told that, even though this was "free" France it was still a treacherous trip. The French as they had tried to do with me, were handing people over to the Germans left and right. It was a long way, a days journey. I slept all the way there on my mothers lap. It is funny what we remember. I can see the road ahead of us as we drove. It was lined with beautiful trees on both sides. I wanted to see the country very badly, but instead kept falling asleep. It was a dangerous journey, but it was also the first time, in days,



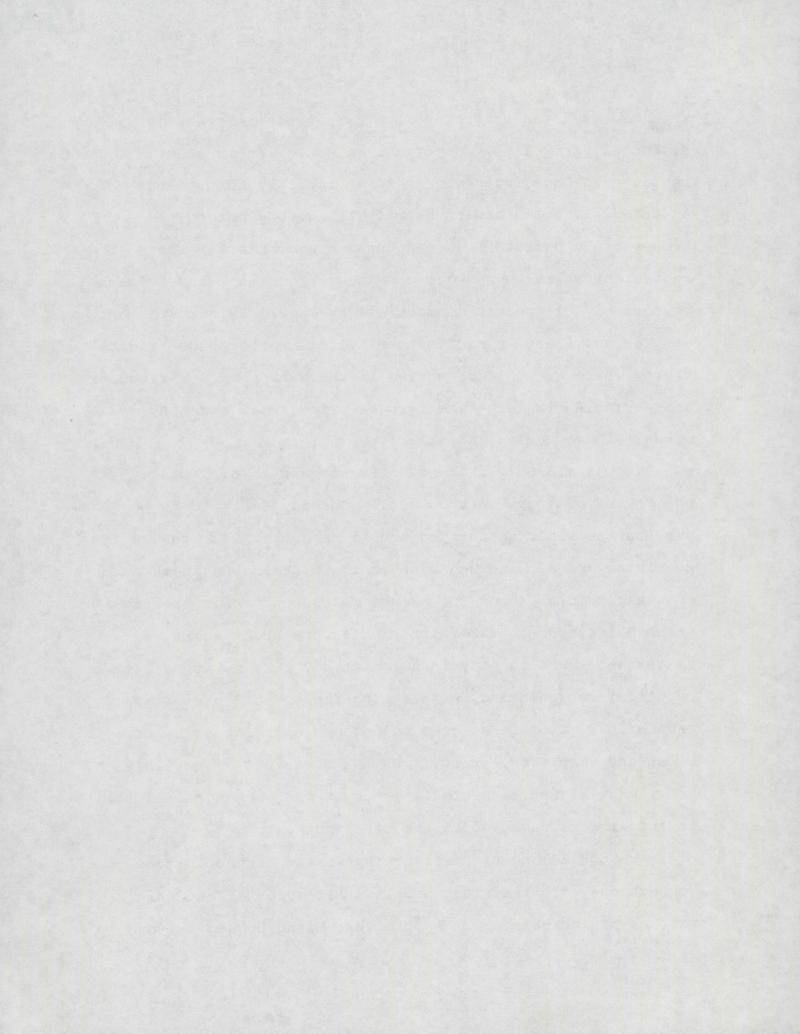
that I felt at all safe. When we arrived in Lyon my parents knew where to go. It was a certain hotel, where many other Dutch people where staying. We obtained a room for the four of us. It was a large room with two beds, a wash basin, and plenty of room for the four of us. My father's childhood friend Barend Broekman, who he had met in Antwerp at Michaels fathers house, was also in the hotel. Sal decided to get a room together with Michael. Poor Sal, he had not bargained on having to take care of teenagers who belonged to another family. The Broekmans and the Grishavers decided to merge their resources in order to get the two families to Switzerland. My father had the money, and Barend knew his way around France. He had been in the movie business in Paris for many years. His French was perfect and he was terribly clever and charming. The men obtained food coupons for us so we could eat. You needed these coupons in order to buy food; and of course French citizens were able to obtain them. So we had to go to the black market for our coupons. We ate many meals in our hotel room. Just to get a loaf of bread could take hours. Sal had become part of our family, and we did everything together. Since cooking was not permitted, my mother set up some" equipment" in the room so we could all eat there; but they did manage to have an electric tea kettle available. It was also difficult for the French to obtain food. It was war time, and we would all take turns standing in line for any kind of food. Sal was always



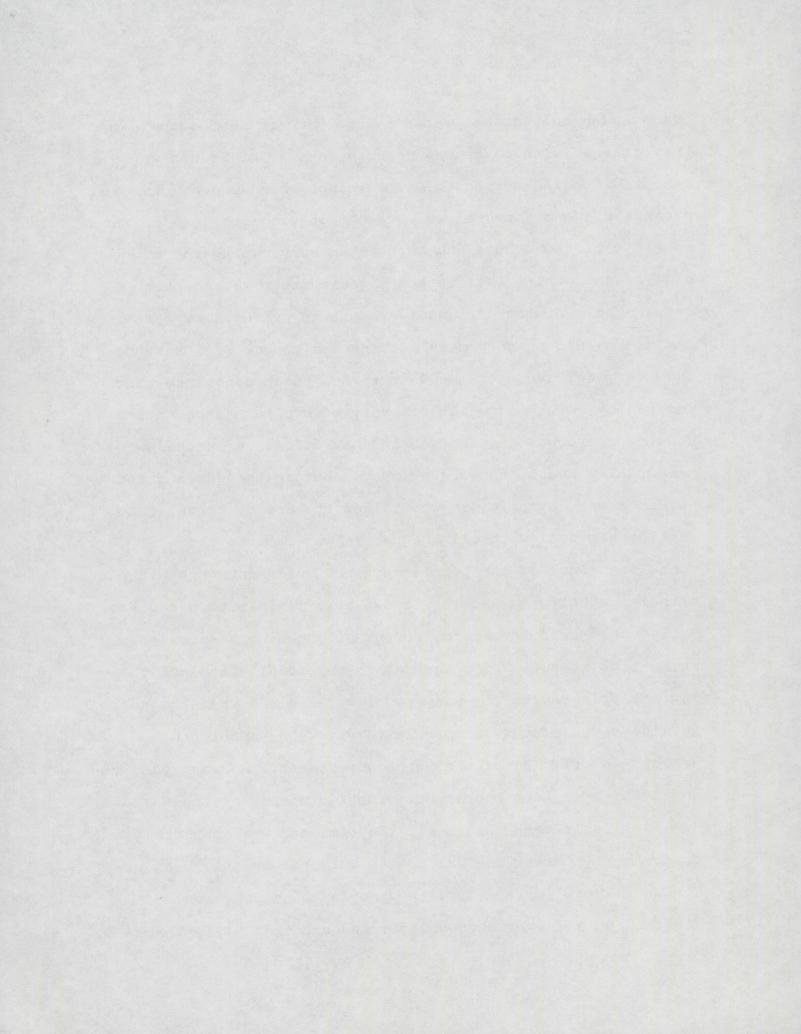
with us. You can understand how my parents felt about him. He had saved my life. Sometimes we would eat in a restaurant. Once, even though I was terribly hungry and underfed, I couldn't eat the only thing they served ----- kidneys. My parents found an underground, black-market restaurant where we had our once a week hot meal and it made me terribly ill to eat so much all at once. This restaurant was far away, and we had to take a long trolley ride to get there, where we would be served in the back room. I remember them bringing in large platters of sliced veal and many wonderful vegetables and salads.

It was mid-July and hot in France and I still had my only dress of heavy knitted wool. One day Sal told my parents, he would go out and see if he could find dresses for my sister and me. He had been in the clothing business and knew a good deal about it. Since we had only this one dress which Sal needed to take with him for the right sizes, my sister and I had to stay in all that day. He returned with a beautiful cotton dress, with spring flowers all over it for each of us. It felt so good to put on something soft, cool, clean and very, very pretty. What a treasure! I gave him many, many kisses, especially since it was such a relief not to suffer scratchy wool in the stifling heat.

It took a long time for my father and Barend to make connections with the right people. All sorts of bad things were happening here now. People were being picked up; and



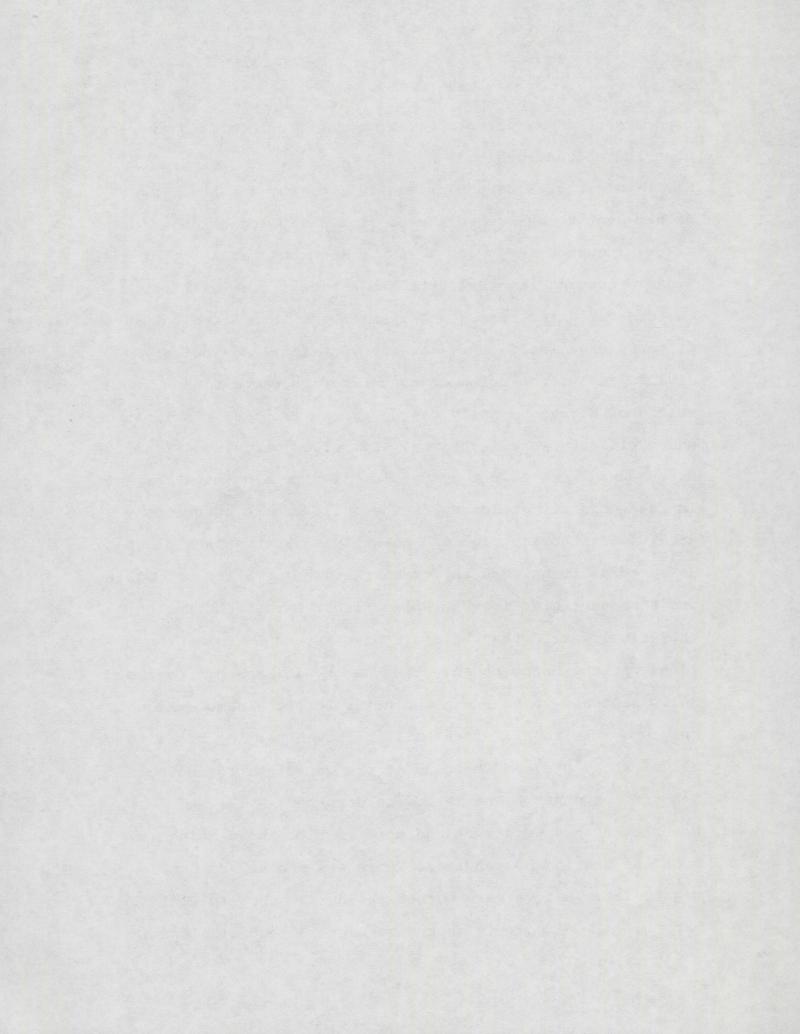
even though the Germans weren't here yet, it seemed the same. They started with raids and deportations. The French were in cahoots with the Germans. One morning, when we went down to breakfast, we discovered we were the only guests left in the hotel. All the others had been taken away during the night; and it was nothing less than a miracle that we had been overlooked. All our friends were put in prison. My father decided he had to do something. He had to get Sal, Barend, and everyone else out. He went to the Dutch consulate which was run by a very nice but not very effective Frenchman. However there was another man in that office, a Dutch Jew named Sally Noach, who lived in Lyon before the war started. He was a very dynamic man who talked the French consul into letting him deal with all the people who came to the consulate. Some of the people were not Dutch and were without either a country to call their own or a legitimate passports. Sally could turn them into instant Dutchmen with a passport in no time at all. Of course, this was totally against the law but life saving for many people. When the raids began, he also found places for people to hide. He "appointed" himself an official of the Dutch government. He was ready to do anything to keep people out of the clutches of the Nazis. He did illegitimate things all the time and was absolutely great at it. After the war he was knighted by the Queen of Holland. Many years later, the people he helped, now distributed all over the world, found out that Sally Noach



needed money. My parents set up a fund for him, and everyone contributed generously.

Well, to get back to the prison full of our friends. father went to the consulate to find Sally and ask him for help. Together they went to the prison but had a lot of trouble getting in. Sally talked a blue streak with the quards and somehow persuaded them to let them enter the prison. Once inside they saw everyone they knew being divided into lines going to concentration camps either in Poland or Germany. Sally ran up to the front of the lines where officers were in charge. He yelled very loud "I am the Dutch consul and I want my people. Is there no more respect in the world for diplomacy?" The bullies were notoriously afraid of authority figures and Sally took advantage of that. He acted as if he were the commandant, doing a lot of yelling and threatening. Since he spoke fluent German and French, they finally said that he could have anyone he knew by name. If he was the Dutch consul, then he should know his people. Sally happened to be a man who never forgot a name. He not only was able to "liberate" all the Dutch people, but also all of those who had shown up at the consulate for help at one time or other. The rest were deported.

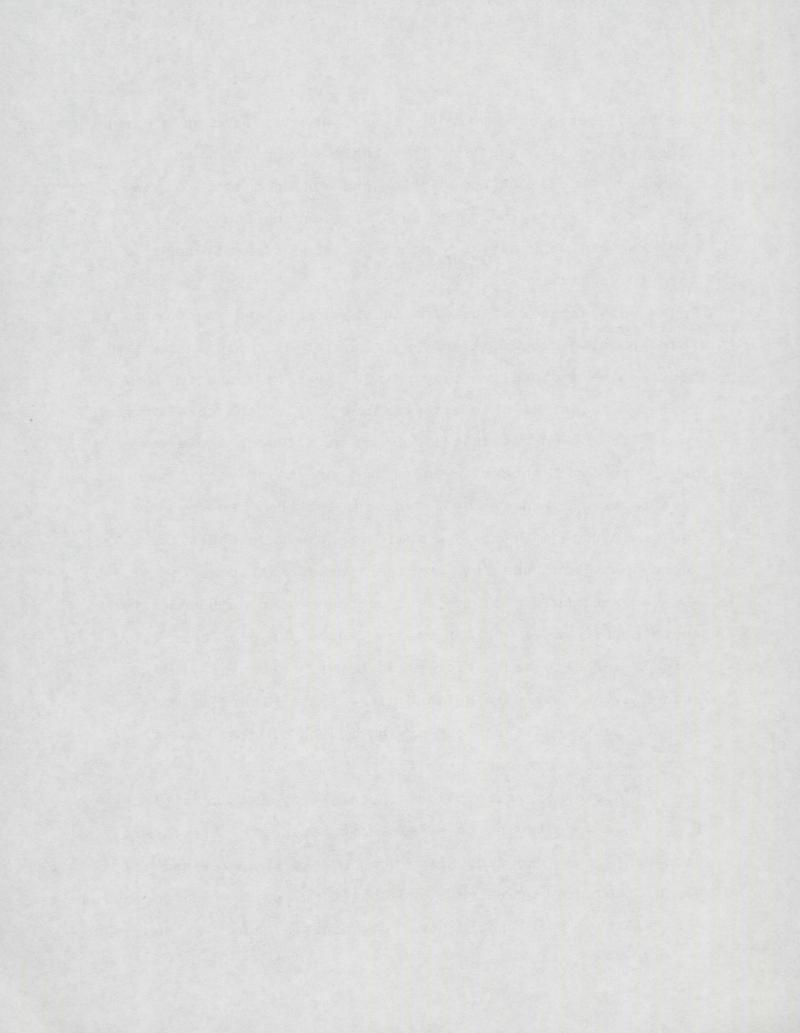
Nevertheless we were more and more worried about being in Lyon and getting apprehended. There was another raid a few nights later but we were warned in advance that it would happen. All of us (it must have been 35 people) slept in



one small garage somewhere in Lyon. We all slept on a cement floor next to one another. It was all so ludicrous that, suddenly, we all got the giggles and couldn't stop. I am sure it was a very nervous laughter. During the day my parents were very busy trying to get some idea of where we were to go next.

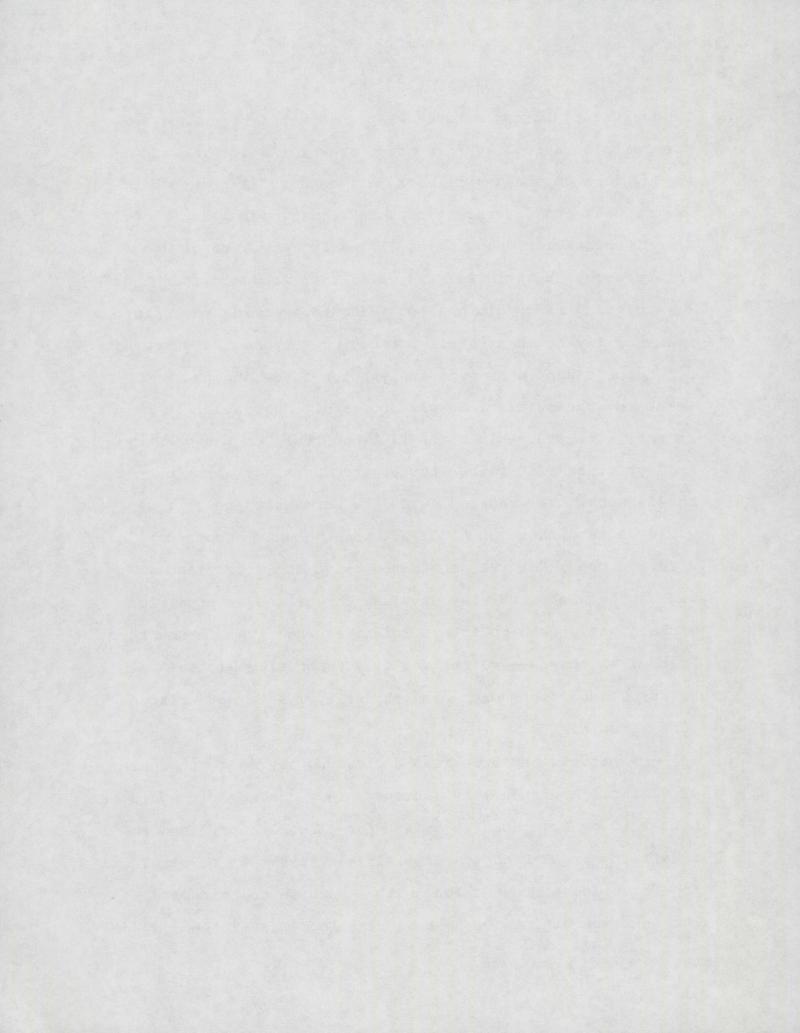
There were about 8 of us kids in the group, and we couldn't stand hanging around all day waiting for our parents to come back; so we decided to go swimming. We took a bus to Lyon Plage, a beautiful open air swimming pool on the outskirts of town. It worked out just fine, and we all went there every day. One day I entered a swimming contest and won; I should have receive a medal, but I couldn't let them have my name so I told them some lie. I felt terrible about that for years, not about the lie, but the medal I wanted so badly. We even went to the movies; and although we didn't understand anything, it was a whole new experience. We did learn French quickly and also had a nice place to go. Personally, I had seen only one movie in Holland; it was the Wizard of Oz with Judy Garland, and I ran out crying in the middle. But these French movies were much more fun.

We did other crazy things in this very dangerous place. I think we were trying to have a somewhat normal life. Mrs. Broekman was a very fancy lady who, before the war, had all her clothes made by Balmain and Chanel in Paris. She decided that all the woman should have some dresses made. So she



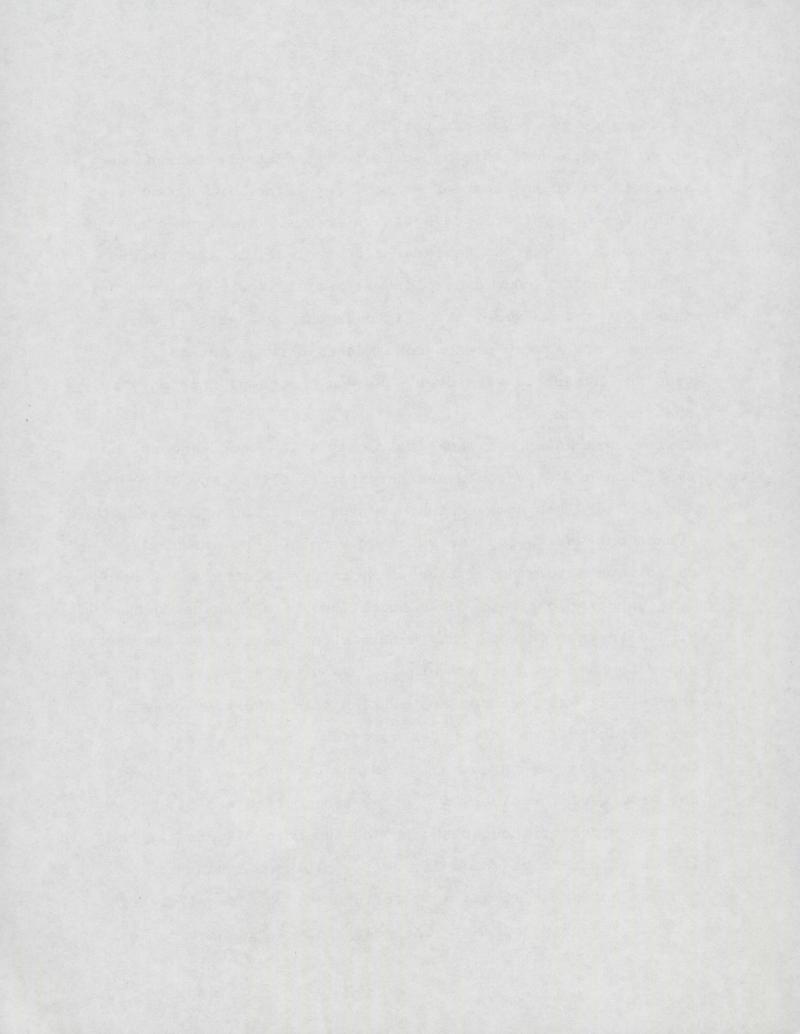
took us to the dress maker. We picked out fabrics and were carefully measured. When we came back for a fitting and it was my turn to stand still for half an hour, I passed out. I was so weak and undernourished, so I just couldn't take it. When I think back about this, I find it very strange and interesting. What is so strange is that we would do things like getting fancy clothes and going to swimming pools in the midst of living in a Hotel, not eating very much and trying not to be caught. We were in Lyon for three months. We heard that Switzerland was not safe. One could not rely on the Swiss. Sometimes they let people enter the country; and, at other times, they turned them back, or worse over to the Germans. We wondered, with the Germans so near if we would be safe there at all? Not knowing what happened to his wife and baby; Sal was determined to go to Switzerland because he wanted to stay as close to Holland as possible. Michael was picked up by his relatives who lived in Southern France, which was a relief for all, especially Michael. Because I don't remember him very well, I have not written much about him.

My parents and Broekmans decided to try to go to Spain or Portugal and then leave Europe. They conceded it would be better to be in a Spanish prison for illegal entry than to remain in "free" France. So their next task was to get legal papers to leave France along with a Spanish transit visa; but that was asking for a small miracle. The French did not



want anyone to leave, and the Spanish didn't want anyone to enter. There were more and more rumors that the Germans were about to usurp the rest of France. My father and Barend sent the wives and children to Southern France. The two woman and four children went to Beziers, a town closer to the French-Spanish border. Our game plan was that if the men didn't get those papers, we would all walk over the Pyranees. The Pyranees are a very treacherous mountain range not really made for humans to walk over. We would attempt this only in the last resort.

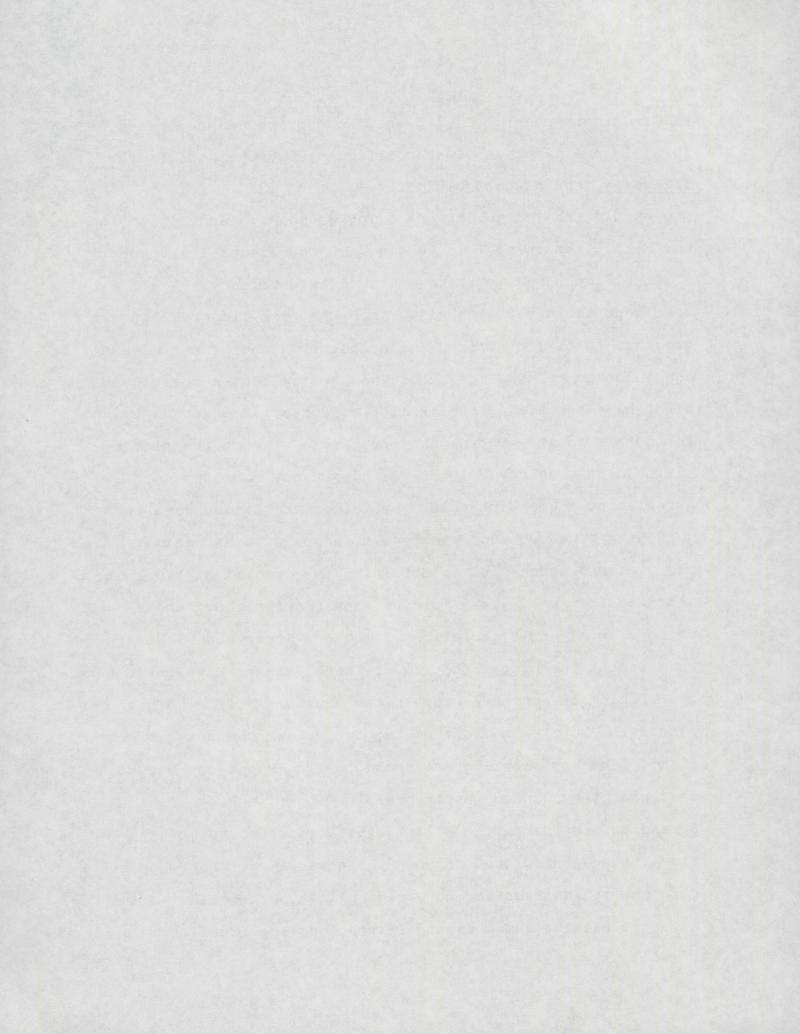
Beziers was an enchanting little city with a town square and small houses. You could see the mountains from any place there. There was someone in town whom we contacted. He was French but worked for the Dutch government. He arranged for us to move into a Hotel there. My mother, sister and I even went shopping one day and we bought beautiful leather gloves. Mine were knit on top with leather on the bottom. I was so happy to have such lovely gloves. Food was still very scarce. It was December and getting cold. Roasted chestnuts were being sold on the street corners. One day we ate chestnuts for all three meals. Nanny got very ill; and, in the middle of the night, my mother had to find a doctor. At first the doctor thought she had an appendicitis attack, but it turned out to be something self limiting. I want to mention here that it was most fortunate that none of us got sick during this journey. That certainly would have put us



all in great danger. Trying to find doctors and medicines, in a strange place is always difficult; but when one is there <u>illegally</u>, the danger multiplies.

One evening the consul arranged for us to have an elegant in our Hotel, something I looked forward to because I was hungry all the time. Usually there was so little to eat. We all sat at a long table set with silver, crystal and flowers. It was glorious to feel civilized again; but when the dinner came and I looked at my plate, there was a tiny little roasted bird, head and all, with its little legs sticking straight up in the air on it. There was very little else on the plate, but it didn't matter. I was not hungry any more. After about a week in Bezier, my father and Barend came to join us. I was so happy to have my Pappa with us again. The men were successful in obtaining the crucial exit permits and transit visas. They told us many stories about their various trial and tribulations. The one I remember is that they bought the biggest bottle of Chanel number Five perfume they could get and then went to the passport office. placed the bottle in front of the lady clerk who issued visas. She kept looking at it and telling Pappa and Barend that what they wanted was impossible.

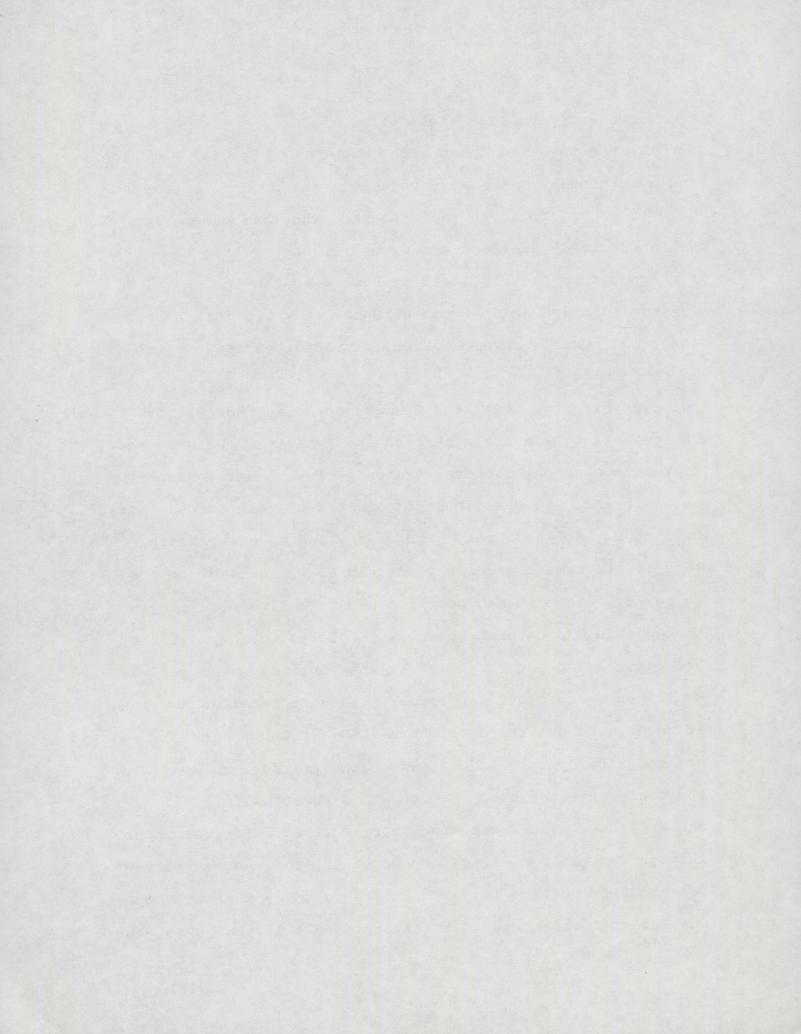
Barend pushed the bottle a little bit closer to her every time she suggested that "maybe" there was a way; but when she said she couldn't do it, he would pull it back again. After a lot of talking and charming flirtation, she finally



succumbed and gave them eight visas.

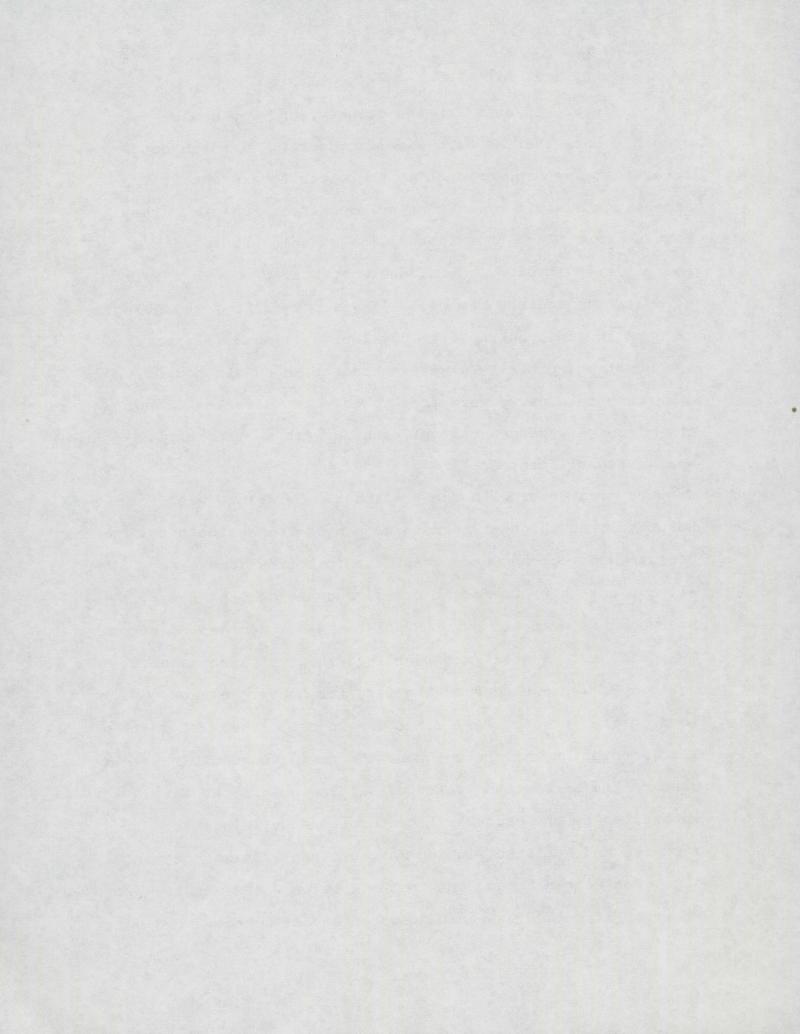
We had to go to Spain right away. The men took me aside, and even though I was the youngest in the group, they asked me what I thought about their plans. They had become firm believers in my feelings and premonitions. I told them that I was not able to tell ahead of time when the feeling of imminent danger would become evident. It would just happen sometimes, mainly when a serious situation presented itself. We decided to leave.

Two days after we left, the Germans occupied the rest of France. We took a train through the Pyranees. We were so fortunate that our fathers were such clever men. People we met later said it was almost impossible to walk across those mountains. It was a very strange feeling to enter Spain legally. It made me feel uncomfortable. It seemed too good to be true since it had become a habit to live with danger. Many people who entered Spain, were picked up, even if they had papers, and put in jail. We knew that and wondered what would happen to us at the border. I can't remember how long it took us to get there or where it was that we actually crossed into Spain; I do remember the platform as we got of the train in Barcelona. Everyone had to stand in line. can still see myself standing there. It took forever to go through immigration. I told my Dad that "the man over there" was probably waiting for us. It seemed to me that this man was looking for someone. My father didn't listen to me.



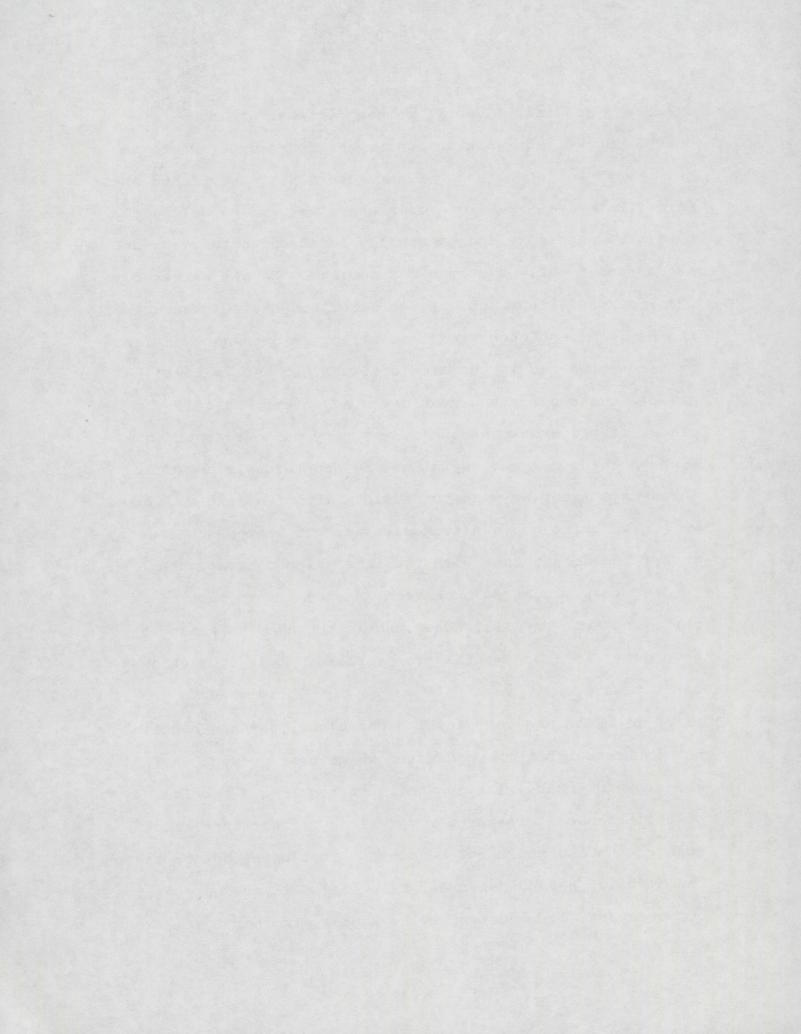
was too intent on entering the country, and who could possibly know that we were entering Spain. We found out later that the man was sent by the Dutch Government to try and help its citizens. We never connected with him. They kept us in a place that looked like a jail. It was a big, empty place without windows; and what scared me was the iron cots leaning against the wall. I was sure that I was going to have to sleep on those. They kept calling my father in and questioning him. We were there for about six hours, and then they told us we were free to go. As we walked out of the place we passed a cart piled high with shelled nuts. What a sight: food.

We went to a Hotel with the Broekmans. Barcelona was beautiful and the next morning we wanted to see the city. My parents went to the Dutch consulate to borrow some money. We all got together, the eight of us, and divided the money. Everyone was on their own. My sister and I decided to go out by ourselves. I still can't believe that my parents let us do so. We wandered around the city for hours and kept buying food on the streets. All of it was so delicious. We left little notes in mail boxes where the names sounded Dutch. went to the Harbor and looked at all the boats. enthralled by the Gaudy architecture. The buildings were so much fun and we tried finding more of them. It was getting late, and we had to go back to the Hotel. Where was it, and what was it called? We had no idea; and of course, we didn't



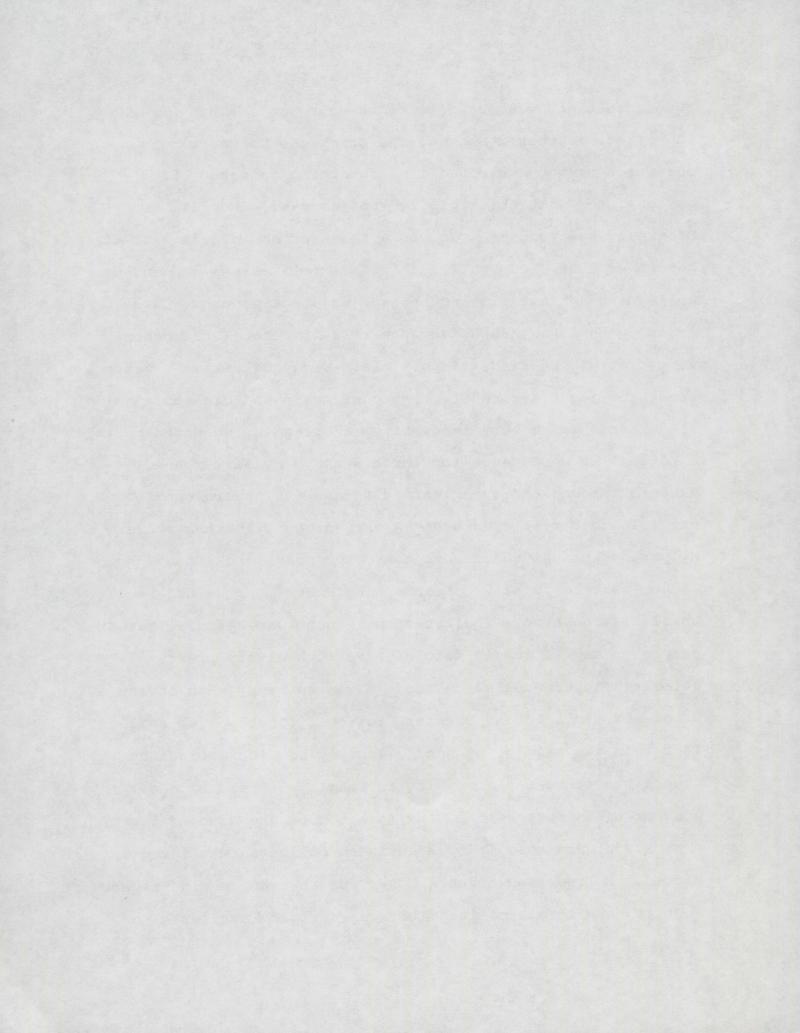
speak any Spanish. Even if we had for what would we have asked? So we kept walking and trying to remember where to My sister and I had a fight I said "this way," and she said "that way". We wrote down where we were so we could return if necessary and we finally found our Hotel. No one seemed upset that we stayed out so late. We all gathered in the Broekman's room. Every one described their adventure of the day. Barend suggested that all of us put whatever leftover money we had in the middle of the bed; so we could divide it again for the next day's adventure, Marcel, the oldest of the Broekmans son's, was very put out about this since he hadn't spent anything. He had to do it anyway. Three days later we went to Madrid. It was a long ride, and we had to bring our own food with us. It turned out that my mother and Jo had come with the same whipped cream cake. In fact they bought so much food, and we ate so much of it that I became very ill. When one is not used to eating a good deal, is a big mistake to overload. Your stomach just can't take it.

As Jo Broekman was very fashion conscious, she had bought a hat in France that she protected where ever we went. Actually she drove us crazy with her hat. It required a special place, because it featured a very long feather that stuck straight up and could not be bent. After being on the train for a while, Barend asked her a few times if she were comfortable. Jo wondered why he kept asking her that: He

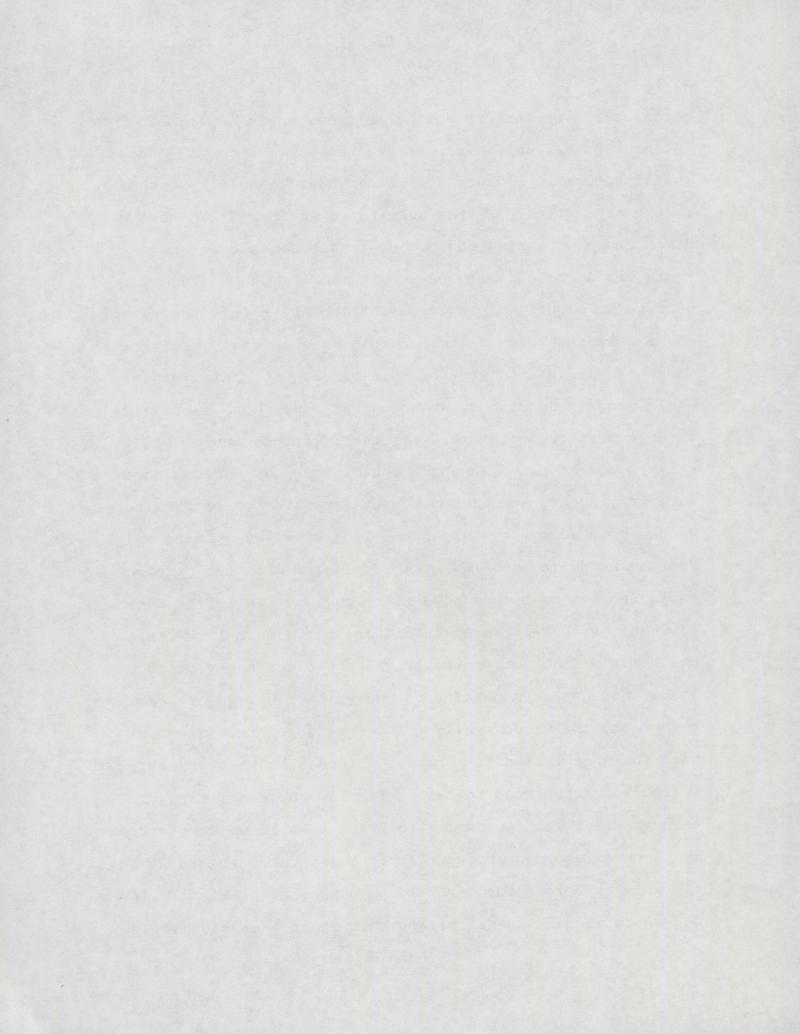


responded that "you are sitting on your hat". That was the end of her feather! She was the first one to laugh. Even in our worst moments we would find something to laugh about. I am convinced that this ability kept us sane. Robert Broekman, the youngest son was a teenager and didn't want to bother with me. On that train ride I fell asleep and ended up leaning against him and he gave me a sharp push. Much later, when I was grown, someone told him that I had become very pretty. He said, "impossible." When he knew me I was a funny looking kid with all that curly hair and glasses.

Madrid was a very large city; and, again, we ended up in We were there for three weeks. My sister and I wandered around and even learned to use the underground. One day I found a real treasure: A very elegant leather store. My parents had given us some money to spend, and I could no longer wait to finally get something. Remember we had absolutely nothing. The treasure I found was a small leather change purse. It could fold up, and it had very pretty colorful flowers tooled on top. I was so happy with it and we also found a Dutch- Spanish Dictionary that was so small, it fit in the palm of my hand. I could now look things up when I wanted to say something in Spanish. These became my most precious possessions. My father took one diamond out of a necklace, and sold it to a business colleague who lived in Madrid. He received so much money for it that we didn't know what to do with all of it. There wasn't much available to



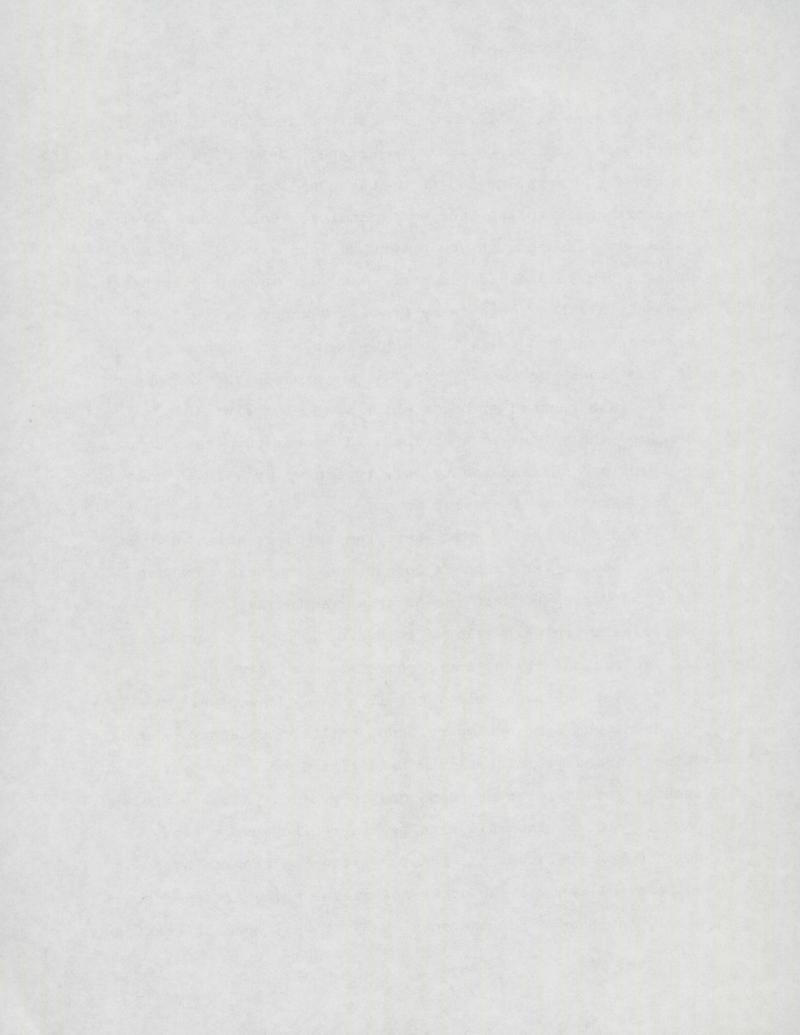
purchase and we were expecting to leave Spain any minute. We bought clothes, underwear, shoes, leather suitcases, and anything else we could find. Other Dutch people kept coming to the same Hotel. In the morning we would wait in the dining room wondering and hoping to see someone we knew. There was a whole family of twenty members who had come, believe it or not, direct from Holland by train. The father was a well known art dealer and had made a "deal" with the Germans: All of his art for safe passage to Spain for the whole group. But nobody we knew ever came. One evening my parents went out to dinner with their friends and we had to stay in the hotel. At about ten o'clock, we decided that we were very hungry and wanted to get something to eat. After we had been so hungry for such a long time, everything in Madrid was delicious. We were also angry with our parents for going out to have a good time and leave us in the Hotel. It wasn't very safe in Spain either and we were lucky that the Nazis didn't get us there. Nevertheless Nanny decided to go out and get us something to eat while I stayed at home. I leaned out the window waiting for her to return. gone for what seemed like hours. I was sure that something terrible had happened to her. Finally she did return, triumphantly, with wonderful pastries. While we were eating, my parents returned and were furious with us. terribly dangerous for girls to go out alone at night. was white slavery in Spain; and that meant that bad people



could kidnap young girls and sell them. I retorted telling my parents that it was their fault for not telling us about those things and leaving us alone while they were having a good time. How quickly one gets back to normal child-parent relations even though we were still in dangerous territory. One still had to be careful in Spain. German uniforms were everywhere since the Nazis were close friends of the Fascist Spanish leader, Franco.

We discovered there was a ship on which we could get
passage but we had to go to a Seaport called Vigo. We left
Madrid in a big hurry along with all the other Dutch refugees
who had come to the Hotel and set off for Vigo. Vigo was a
quaint town with many hills very much like San Francisco. We
had to stay there a few days before boarding the ship. One
day one of our Dutch friends decided he would have his only
pair of shoes shined by a man with a stand in the street.
The man kept saying something to him in Spanish which he
didn't understand. He had no idea what the man wanted. Our
friend just nodded his head, which was a big mistake since
the shoe shine guy started to run away with his shoes. Our
friend ran after him in his stocking feet. When he finally
caught up with the shoe shine man he found that he had taken
the shoes to a repair shop.

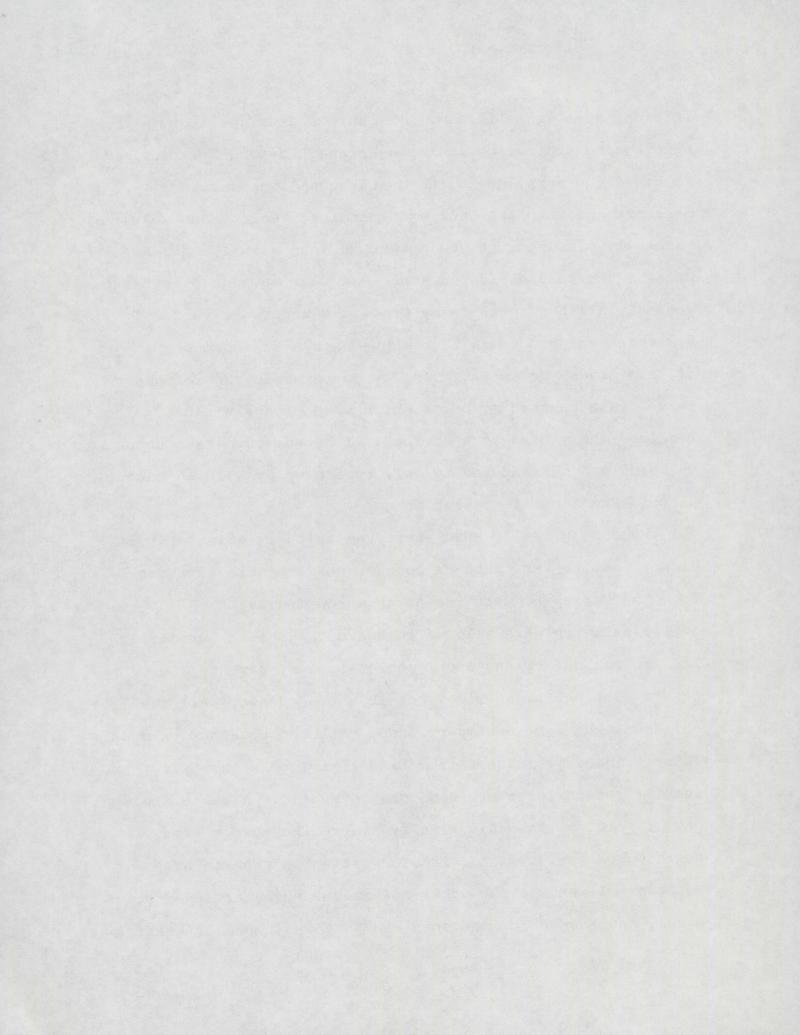
We went to the docks to find the ship that would take us to freedom. The Spanish ship was called the Marques de Camillos. It was November 16, 1942, four months after we



left our home in Amsterdam. The ship seamed small, but we were hoping that we could leave Europe. Before being allowed to board the ship, we had to go through a customs and passport check to show our exit permits. One by one we were carefully searched. A woman took me into a small cubical where I had to undress for her. She went through everything; she felt all the seams in my dress and underwear to see if something was hidden in them. She used a knife to stir a jar of face cream; and when I finally got dressed she refused to leave. She touched my beads which were always visible. I realized she wanted some "bribe"; I became concerned about my beads and surrendered my only treasure, my beloved change purse. She took it and let me go.

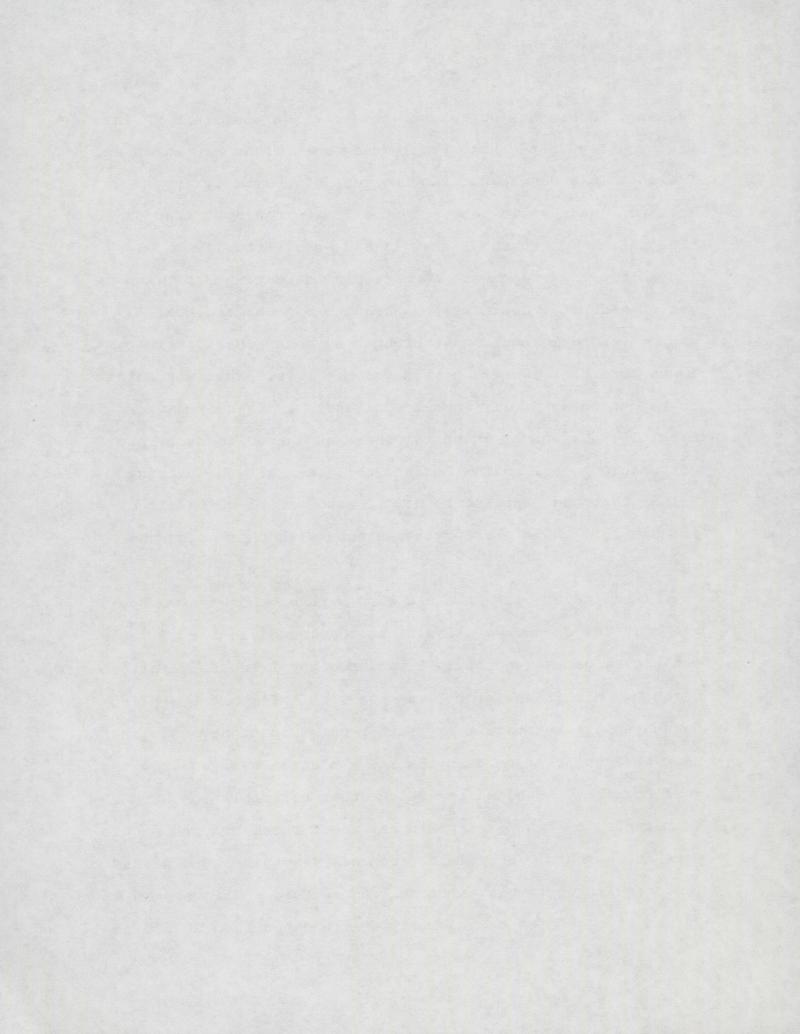
We didn't really know where the ship was going; but it didn't matter very much as long as we were able to escape from the Nazis who were intent on murdering us.

Finally we were allowed to board the ship. Our family had two cabins; Nanny and I shared one, my parents the other. The cabin was tiny, but it mattered not. All the children, who were now my friends, gathered together on deck. This included my friends from Lyon like Inneke and Lilly, and some of the children who had come to Madrid. After a whole day of waiting, the ship finally started to move. Every building on the docks had FRANCO written on them in huge letters. I can see the docks now as the ship left ever so slowly and headed for the open sea. It was the most amazing

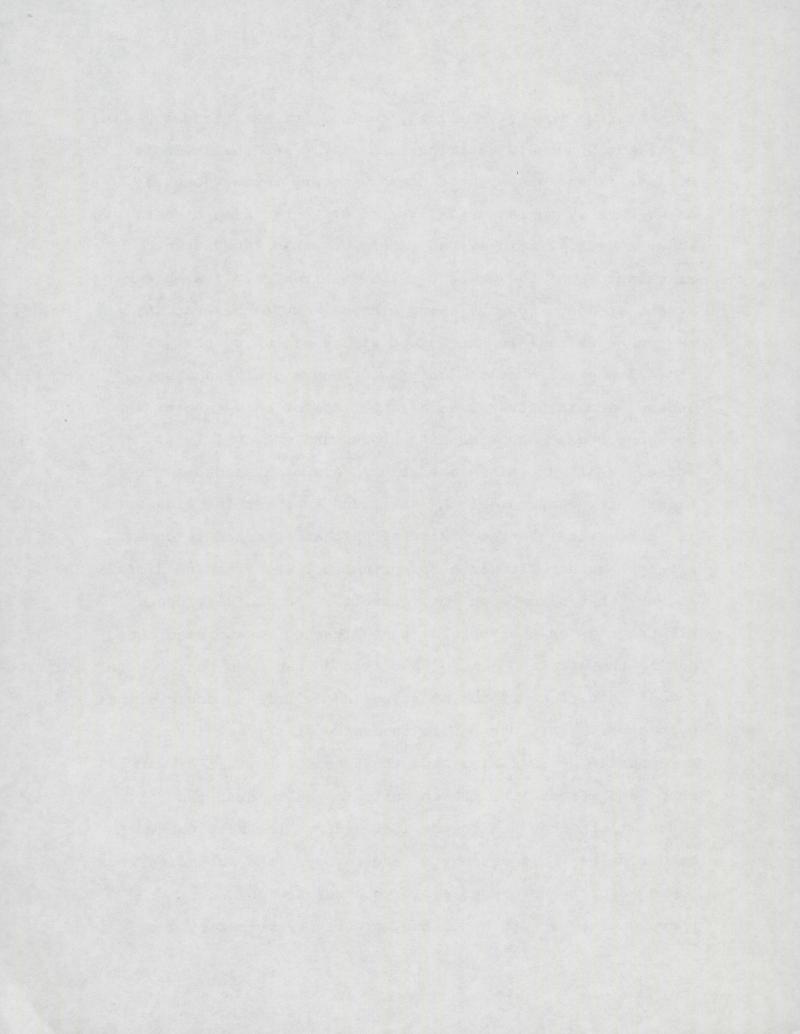


feeling. I was hoping against hope that we would end up in a free country, but no one really knew what might happen to us. I also felt I was abandoning the rest of my family in Holland. What would happen to them? How could we abandon them there? Of course I knew it had been virtually impossible to escape with four people the way we had. And yet we made it. Could we have brought our Oma and Opa? I was convinced I should have brought my aunt's baby, Herman. I was sure that I could have saved his life. What was going to happen to my girlfriends in Holland? I missed them terribly. We had grown up together and shared so much, and I was unable to talk with them and tell them all the exiting things that had happened to me. I resolved to write all of it down so I could share my adventures with them after the war.

I had never been on a big ship before; and when we could see only the Ocean, we all went to the lounge to see if we could play games together. I wondered why I suddenly felt so strange. Within one hour I was sea sick. Sea sick is being nauseated all the time. My father and I spent days sitting next to each other on deck chairs, a blanket over us, feeling just horrible. Besides the Dutch other nationalities were represented on board. I would say about three hundred people were on the ship. The dining room was very nice, and we had waiters with white gloves on serving us food. This seemed so absurd, but come to think of it, what had not been absurd on

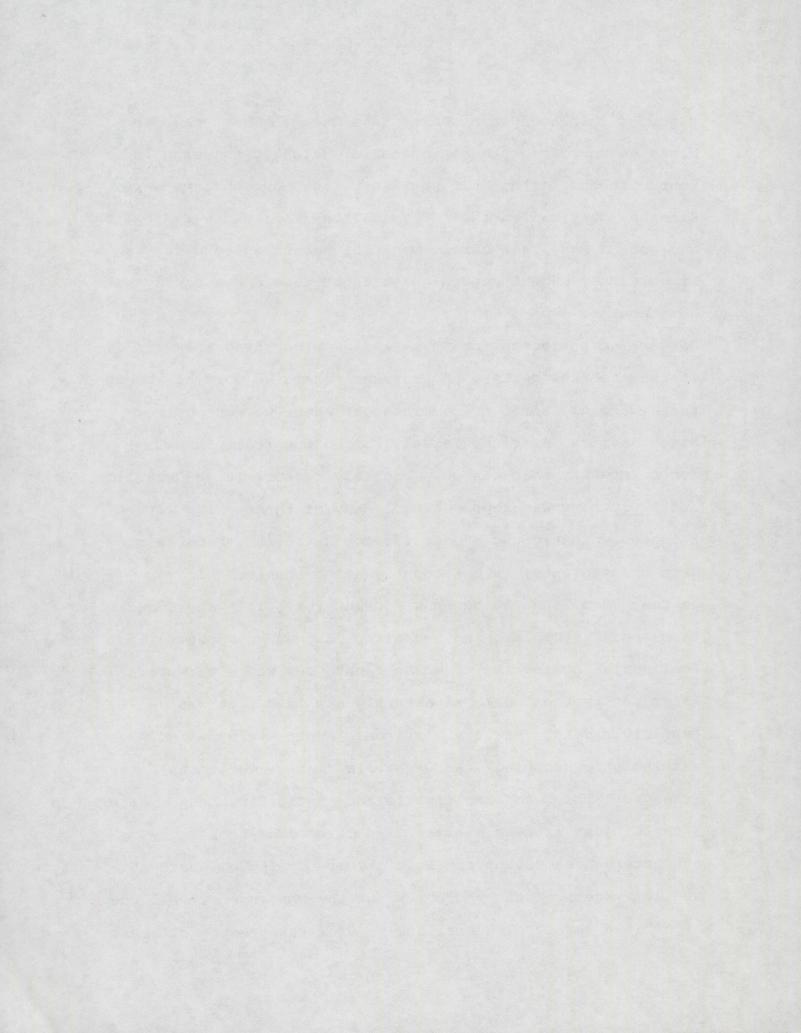


this strange voyage. Not only could I not eat because I was sick, but who could eat rice with little sea shells in it. Because it was winter, the Ocean was very rough. One day as we were lying in our chairs, after we had been at sea for about a week, I told my Dad, there was this funny stick sticking out of the water not too far from us. I keep seeing it and it seems to move along with us. My father sat up; and, when he saw "it" he jumped up and ran up to the bridge where the captain of the ship was. The captain came out, looked, and then there was a lot of commotion up there. Everyone seemed to be running around and making lots of noise. What was this black stick? All of a sudden a big black thing came out of the water and kept getting bigger. It looked like a strange kind of ship and started to come straight at us. It was a submarine! It was flashing signal lights, that said "identify yourself". I could read code. All the kids on the Amsteldijk had learned how to read code during the war, and some of our friends had made boards with a code machine on it for me so me and my friends could signal each other. This was before the walky -talky was invented. Remember it was war time, and the oceans were full of war ships and mines. The men on our ship had to drag the only signal light they had to the left side of the ship where the submarine was. It seemed to take forever; the submarine kept coming closer and closer; everyone was now on deck; there was nowhere to hide, and we were mesmerized by the



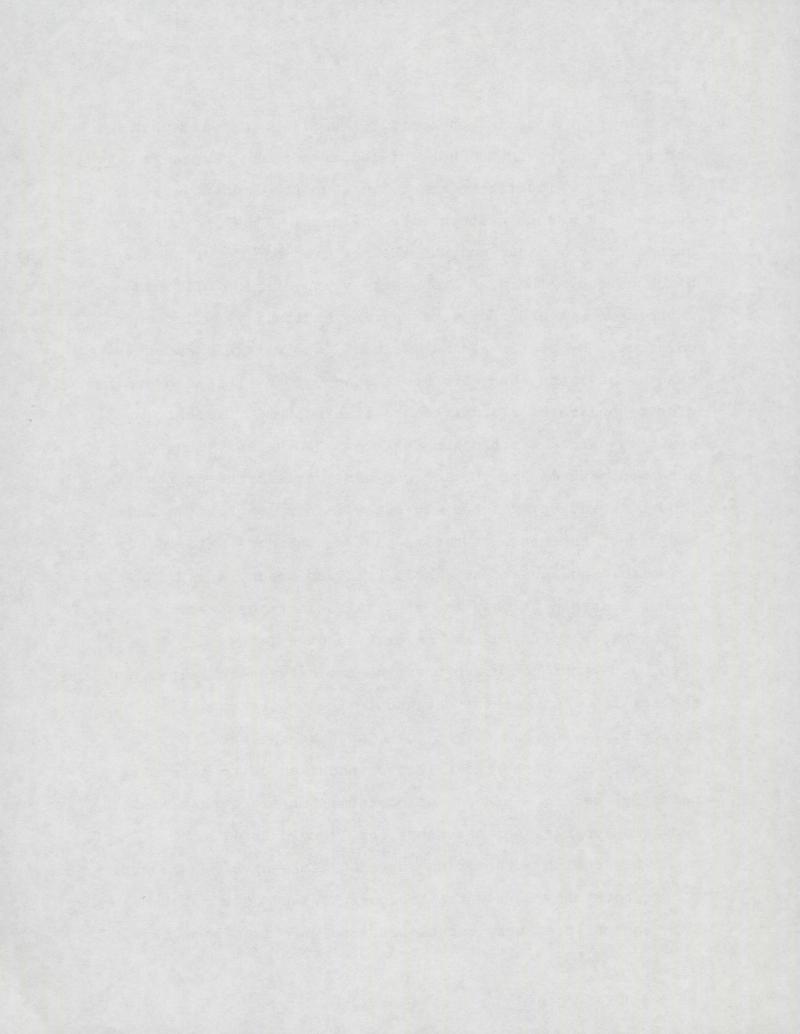
sight of this huge ship coming towards us. They came so close we could see the men on board. Finally the signals went back and forth; and, when they found out that we were Spanish, they raised their flag. Thank God they were English and not German. That surely would have been the end for all of us. They made a sudden quick about-face and suddenly were gone again.

We were on the ocean for three weeks. The third week I started to feel better. No one knew where we were as though there were all sorts of rumors about where we were going: South America, America, Israel, but no one really knew. I don't know why that was so. Probably because it was war time and everything was kept secret. Many of these ships with refugees wandered the oceans for months on end, because they were refused entry in one country after another. getting warm, and the ocean was beautiful. The waters became calm, and I stopped being sea sick. It was so wonderful to feel normal again. We tried to figure out where we were. After yet another week, we suddenly saw land. It was terribly exiting yet very worrisome. Where were we and why was the ship stopping? We were told that we were outside of Trinidad. This was a British Island in the Caribbean. After a day of just sitting at least ten miles from shore, the announcement came that the British were coming on board to see everyone's papers and check out the passengers. All the kids lined up along the railing to view the great excitement



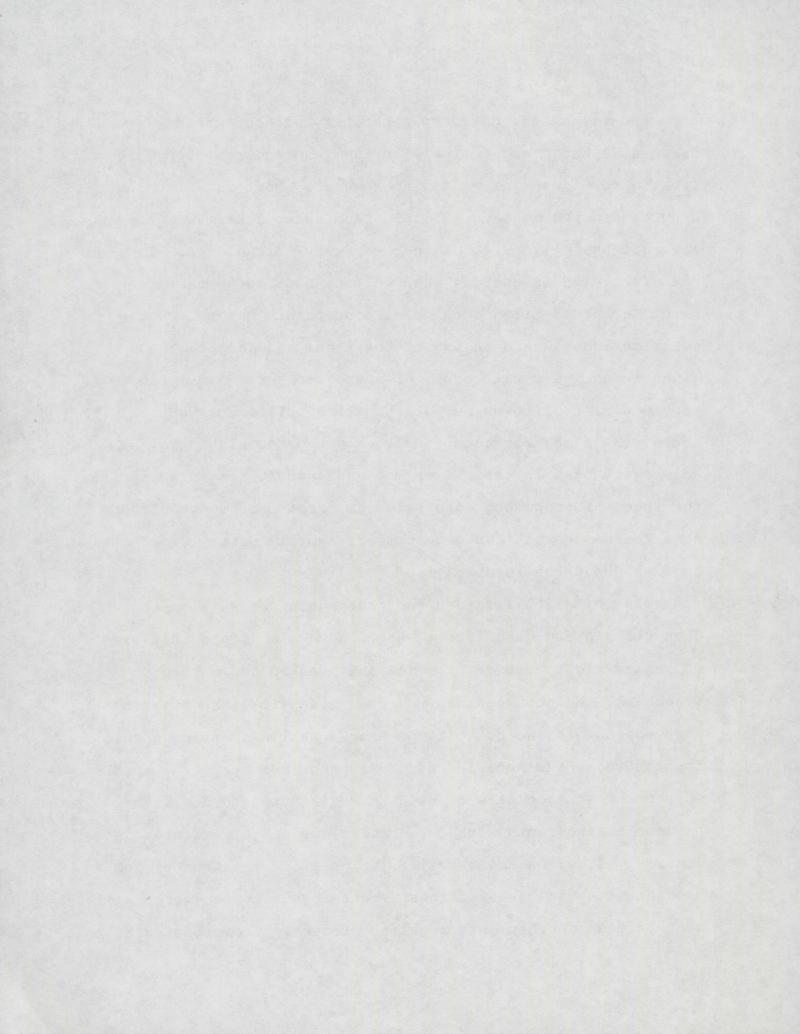
of other people coming on board. A small boat approached us and our ship provided a sort of ladder for the people to climb up on. The first ones to come up the ladder were very large black men in white police uniforms. They looked very strange to us, since most of the children had never seen a black person. The next group were young British officers in white uniforms and they were wearing shorts. They looked gorgeous. My sister and her friends, who were all about 16, reacted as if the men were movie stars. They leaned over the side of our ship in order to see them better. Suddenly my sister's necklace broke and fell towards the sea. screamed; and one of the men who had just started up the ladder looked up, reached way out with his long arm extended, and caught the beads. When he came on board he said in a beautiful English accent " here are your beads, Miss". My father had told us that the most valuable stones were in her necklace. If you have never been on a large ship like that, you might not grasp the distance between the water and the railing. One is very high up, like on the top of a building. Nanny had to sit down, because she was ready to pass out. My father had tried to encourage us to secure the beads by wearing a pin on top of them; but since that wasn't very fashionable, neither Nanny nor I would do it.

The English authorities interrogated everyone on board, and it took many days until the questioning was completed. Even the children were questioned; and when it was my turn,

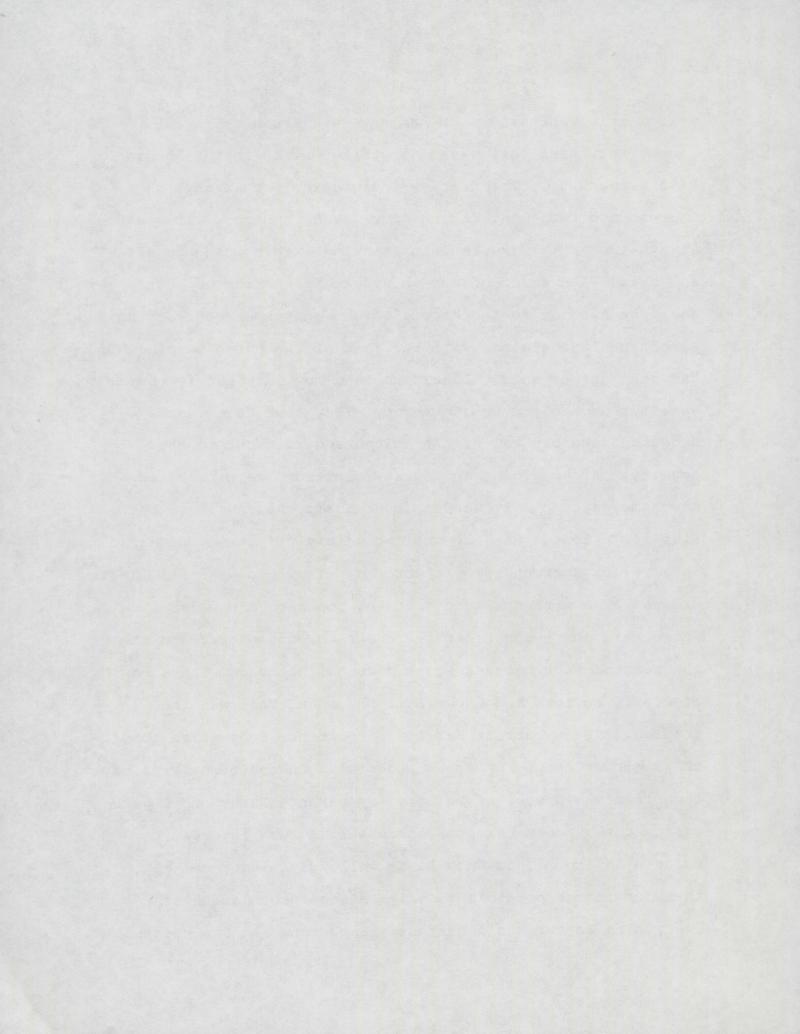


they questioned the children separately without their parents, I had a great time with them. Of course they were looking for spies and wanted to know all about us. I think they considered me safe. I told them about a German antiaircraft nest I knew about that was very well hidden. I had discovered it one day when we were boating on the Amstel River, about 15 miles outside of Amsterdam. Later I went swimming and saw hidden behind the trees and shrubs, these gigantic anti-aircraft guns. I retreated very quickly so they wouldn't discover me. The English officers asked if I could draw a map for them. Well they had the right kid, I knew every bend in that river and had a great time drawing it for them. I found out after the war, from friends who lived near there, that it had been bombed, shortly after I told the English about the location.

The ship left Trinidad and once again, we were on the open sea. A few days later, we again saw land, and this time we sailed right towards it. The ship docked and we had to disembark. We soon learned we were in Jamaica, the British West Indies. As we got off the ship a man in a business suit approached us and notified us he was sent by the Dutch Government to take care of us. He was a Dutch counsel, and he made arrangements with the British for us to remain in Jamaica. It was a great relief for us all. The counsel had brought with him cases of fresh fruit for us to eat while we went through another interrogation process. The grapefruits

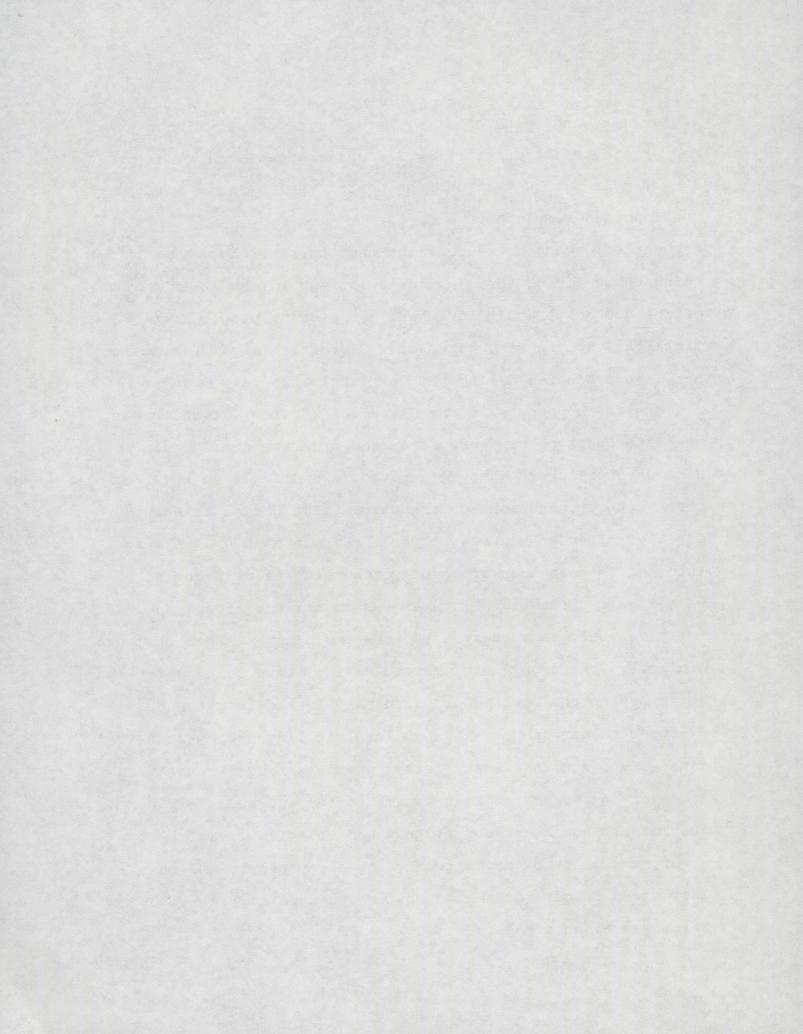


were simply fantastic. We had not seen fresh fruit for months, so there just wasn't anything better that he could have brought us. The British immigration people made us undress and then went through our few belongings. It was always the same: we were left standing with nothing on but the beads. Anything of any value was taken from us; but again we held on to the beads. After many hours of waiting, we boarded buses along with the rest of the Dutch people who had been on our ship. I have no idea how many people there were but probably over a hundred. They took us through Kingston, the Capital of the Island and then out to the country. After riding on a dusty dirt road we arrived at our new home, a camp. It was an intern-camp where we were to live for a long time. It was incredibly primitive, situated in a valley surrounded by mountains. The camp was in a large cleared area without paved roads or concrete sidewalks. There were many wooden barracks next to each other; and at the rear of each barrack was a communal bathroom with a row of sinks, toilets and showers in the open. This was the tropics. Each barrack had a main corridor from which about thirty rooms opened up from each side. On the other side of each room was a sort of balcony. My parents Nanny and I were assigned two rooms next to each other. It was interesting, because the rooms had only half- walls dividing them; therefor it was possible to talk to each other and hear everything in the whole barrack. Each room had two beds and



two chairs, and that was it. There was a central kitchen, and we ate in the cafeteria which was an open area with just a roof over it. We sat on long wooden tables and benches. The food was simple but good.

We settled down once we realized that this is where we were going to be living for a while. We lived in the lower level of the camp; the upper level was occupied by people from Gibraltar, so the camp was called Gibraltar Camp. Gibraltar had been evacuated during the war. Unfortunately we never mixed with the people in the Gibraltar section. Even in our camp the Dutch people were separated from the some German Jews who were there when we arrived. We did get to know them, however, and some of the German kids became friends. One day, after we had been there for a month or so, we were informed that another group of Dutch refugees were coming. We all waited for hours for the bus to arrive; if only a relative would be amongst them. We could hope. When the bus did arrive the people who emerged had to stand in line for hours behind the barbed wire, and they looked frightened. Everyone in our group yelled to them, telling them what a fine safe place this was. Later, when the newcomers settled in, everyone wanted to know their stories and even more what they might know about our friends and relatives. a very small group, maybe twenty to thirty people and the last group to get to Jamaica, but there were no friends or relatives amongst them.

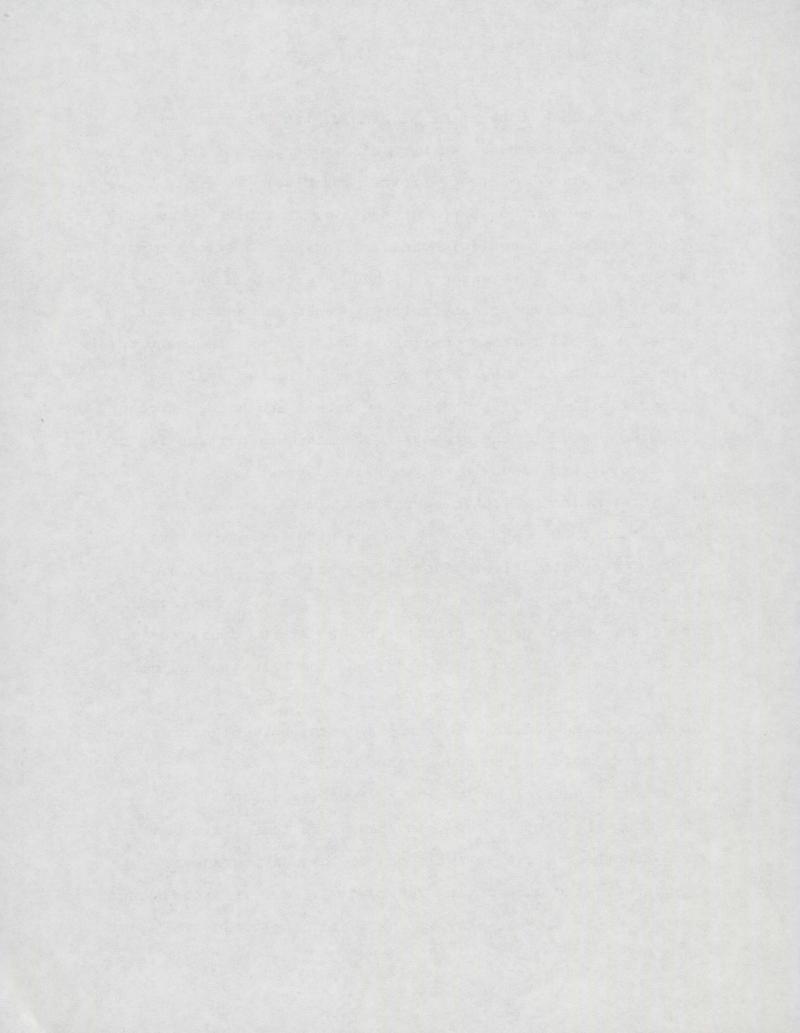


If you had to be interned Jamaica was the place to be and no one complained. We were all so happy just to be alive and safe. From Hell to a tropical paradise! We could leave the camp whenever we wanted from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. My family often went to a beautiful Hotel in Kingston to swim and eat in its fantastic restaurant. I had never before seen food like that. All the fresh fruit you could eat and a giant buffet with all sorts of delicacies on it. We also went to Kingston to buy clothes. Kingston was a rather small town, a tropical village, with many wooden houses and huts. Coconut juice were sold on the streets. The man cuts off the top of the coconut and hands it to you with a straw.

The first thing my father bought for himself was a camera. I hadn't seen him as happy as he was with his new camera for a very, very long time. Photography had always been his passion and hobby. We would eat lunch in a cute restaurant where the owners didn't hand out bills. At the door you just told the lady what you had eaten; and she told you how much it was.

So often it seemed like this was a dream; but, of course, everything else had been a strange dream.

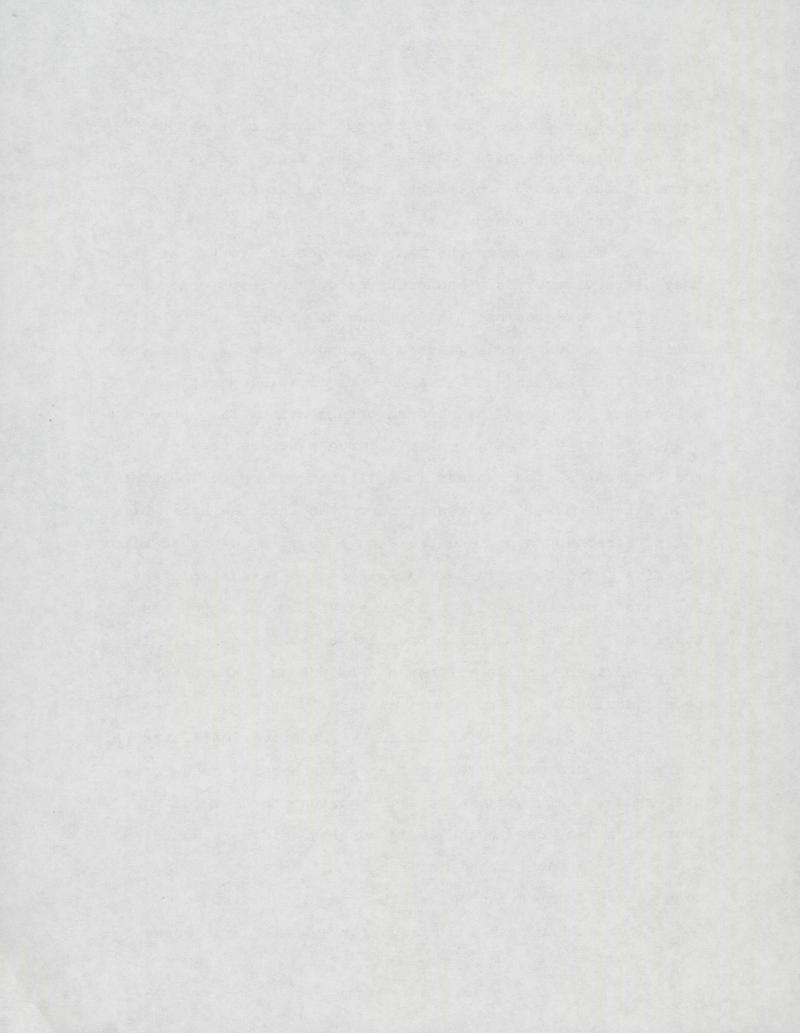
It was so beautiful in Jamaica. There was a two mile road from the camp to the main road where the natives would sit with their fruit to sell; mangos, bananas, oranges, grapefruits and much more. The road was full of mango trees, and you could pick as many as one could carry. We often



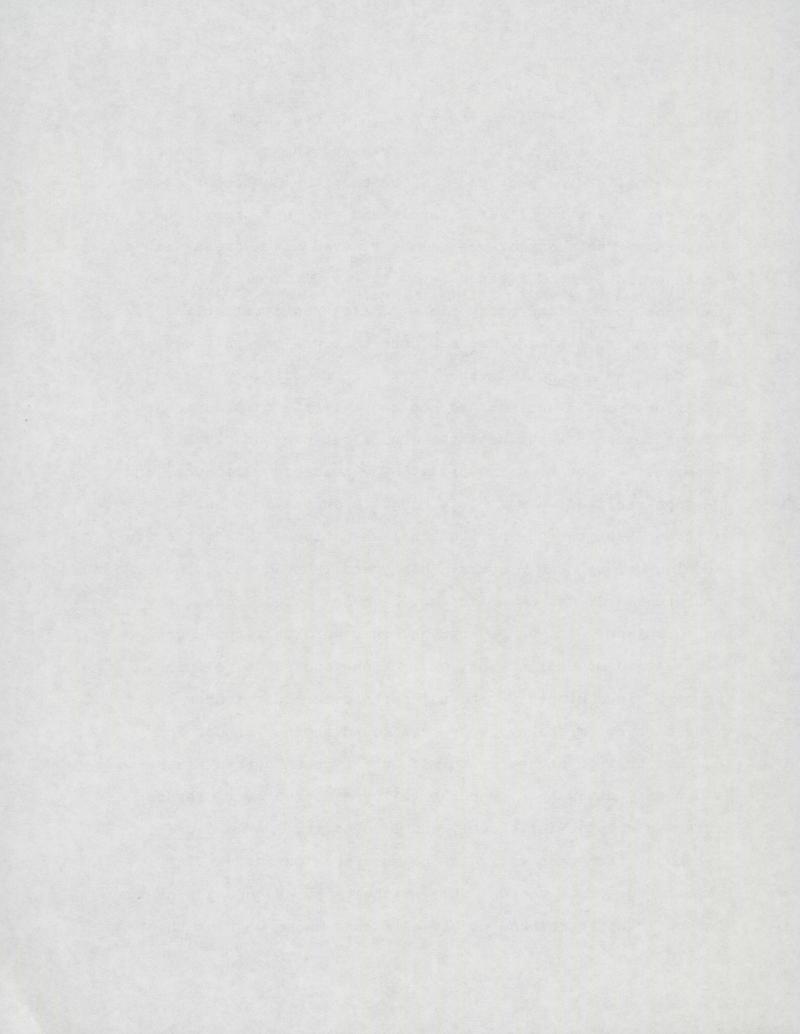
bought a whole banana tree with about thirty bananas on it for two English pennies. We would hang these "bargain" banana trees outside our rooms in the barracks, and eat one whenever we had the urge.

Some of the men in the camp were getting very restless. Most of them were young and accustomed to working, and the life of leisure was becoming difficult. Some started little businesses. One couple started a laundry; they did all the laundry by hand, and it was a very profitable operation. Four other young men invented an orange drink. They squeezed orange juice, put the juice into large pitchers they got from the kitchen, sliced bananas in to it and called it JANAJOMA (Jan-Nate-Jo-Max) . Everyone had gotten into the habit of taking afternoon naps, and these guys would come around after nap time, with their juice and sell it. It was also great! The camp provided us with a buggy service. The buggy was the local bus. It took us from the camp to the main road. had one driver, and we all became his friend. About ten people could fit in it. Jamaica had many buggies. It was their chief mode of transportation. The driver made a trip every few hours, not a very convenient schedule; so we often preferred to walk because it took too long to wait for him. Everything was done in the early morning, since it would be too hot to do much in the afternoon. If we wanted to go to town we would catch the bus at the end of the dirt road.

After we had been in Jamaica for a while our parents

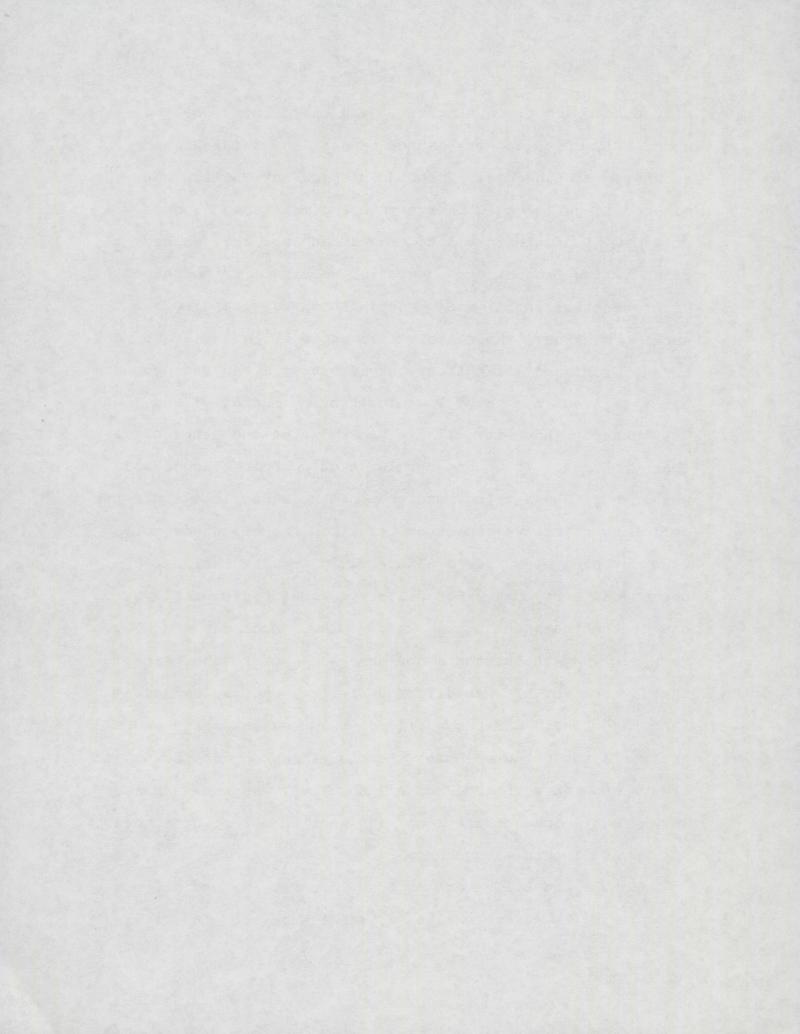


decided that we should go to school. We had not been to school since we left Holland. They asked the camp commander for advice, and he provided it. Most of the English kids on the Island went to private schools and wore uniforms. uniform for this school was a long-sleeved black dress with a white collar --- and a straw hat! It was difficult for Mama and Papa to find the appropriate fabrics and a reliable dressmaker to make the dresses, but that was the only way it was done in Jamaica. In the other part of our camp there was a tailor from Poland who had started a little camp business. Therefore he made our dresses. Our first day in school seemed like another weird dream. The teachers were nuns, and we soon realized we were in a Catholic school. We had to sing God Save the Queen (the English National Anthem) every morning before many prayers. Nanny and I hated this school, not because it was Catholic; but because we felt completely out of place. It was bad enough, that we didn't speak one single word of English, but everything focused on religion. We complained bitterly, and our parents recognized they had made an awful mistake. They soon found another school for us, but this meant new uniforms: short green cotton dresses and pretty straw hats, and the tailor made two more dresses. This was a wonderful school, and I loved it. We went off in the buggy from camp early in the morning. Our driver was waiting for us at the entrance of the camp. He brought us to the bus stop at the end of the dirt road where we took the



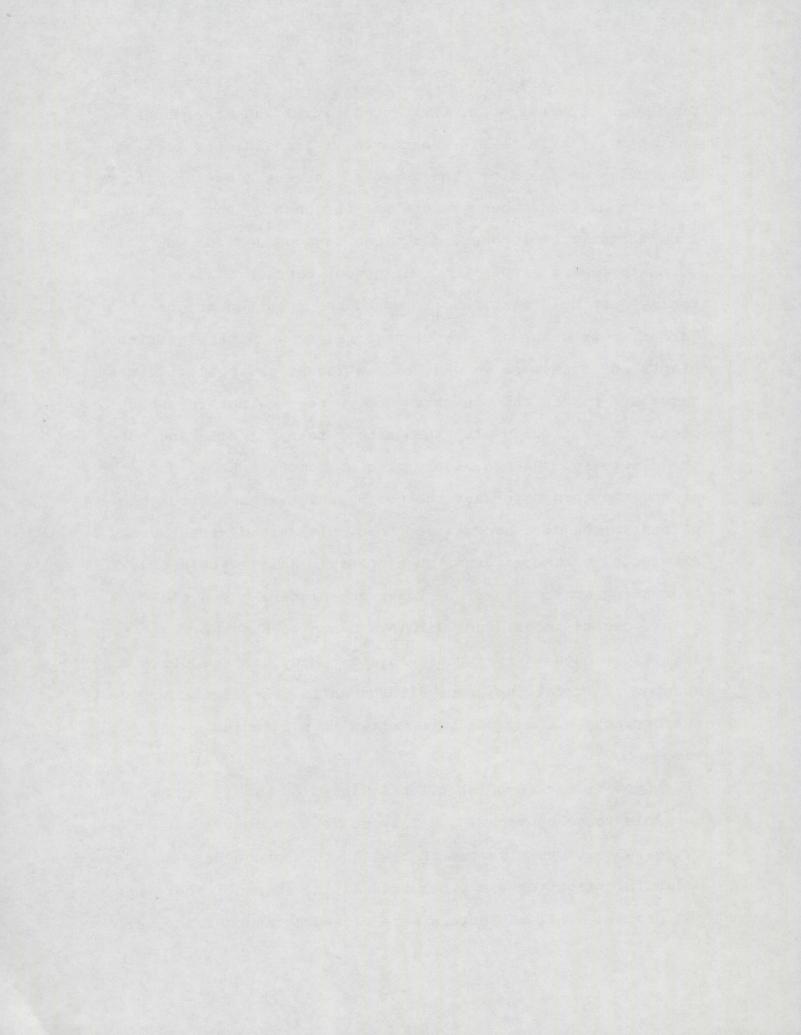
city bus to school in Kingston. The class rooms were completely open, and it was not unusual for chickens and ducks to walk through. I couldn't speak any English but managed to get along with everyone and make some good friends. I did learn a little Jamaican English. We had classes like French, Gym and basket weaving. I thought that was fantastic, and I made wonderful baskets. We also had cooking classes. The teacher told us to bring a list of things from home, like flour, eggs, butter a pan and spoons. Since I lived in a camp, I couldn't bring anything; and I was very unhappy about it. I just had to watch the other girls learn to cook. We bought our lunch at school. The school was in a garden setting, and some of the school cooks offered delicious things we could buy. I liked the empenadas more than anything else. It's a turnover with meat inside. I bought one every day. For desert you could just walk over to one of the trees and pick a mango. The school day was over very early so the students could be home before the heat of the day set in. It was different for us, because we had a long ride home. Our buggy driver would meet us again and drive all the children home. He always looked out for us and always made sure that he had all the kids. He was such a lovely man. Some of the camp kids went to different schools, but we all returned together.

Inneke and Lilly were my best friends. We had all met in Lyon. Lilly was more like me, still a child. Inneke was



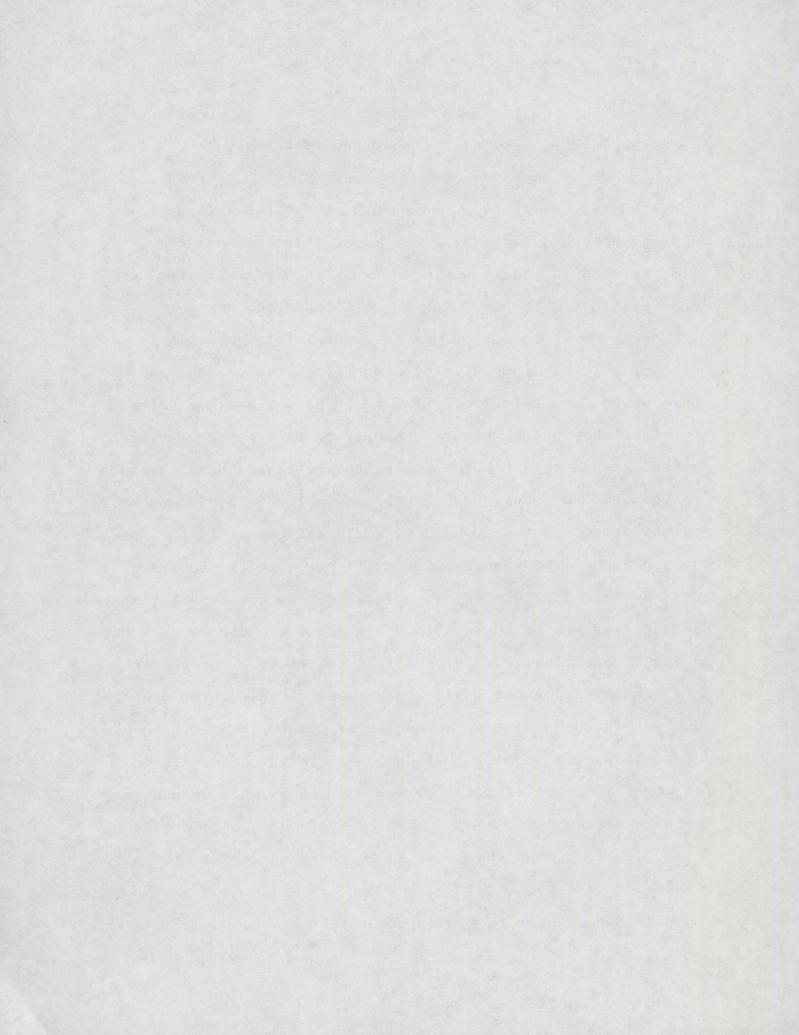
much more sophisticated. She used lipstick and wore shoes that had a little heel. I wondered if I could ever look as attractive as she did. The three of us were always trying to find things to do when we were not in school. Both went to a different school than I did. One day, we decided we were going to make a garden in front of our barrack. really just ugly dirt, and it would be great fun to create a garden. Our camp was very close to a forest with magnificent plants and trees: so we went to the forest and collected many beautiful plants and took them home. We knew nothing about plants or what to do with them accept to dig a hole and put the plants in. We had also picked up some sticks to put around the garden to keep the goats out. We just stuck the plants in the dirt and watered them. It rained almost every afternoon, so there wasn't much upkeep. Well, within a week everything started to grow bigger and bigger. Even the sticks became trees; and, within a month we had the most dramatic garden, a real mini- forest. Many camp people soon started to imitate us; and, after a while, the dirt around the barracks was magically converted into a series of gardens.

Some of the camp inhabitants wanted to see if it was possible to go on vacation. They spoke to whomever was in charge and it was arranged that we go to Montego Bay, a beautiful resort on the other side of the Island. There was one problem. All the Hotels were closed because of the war,



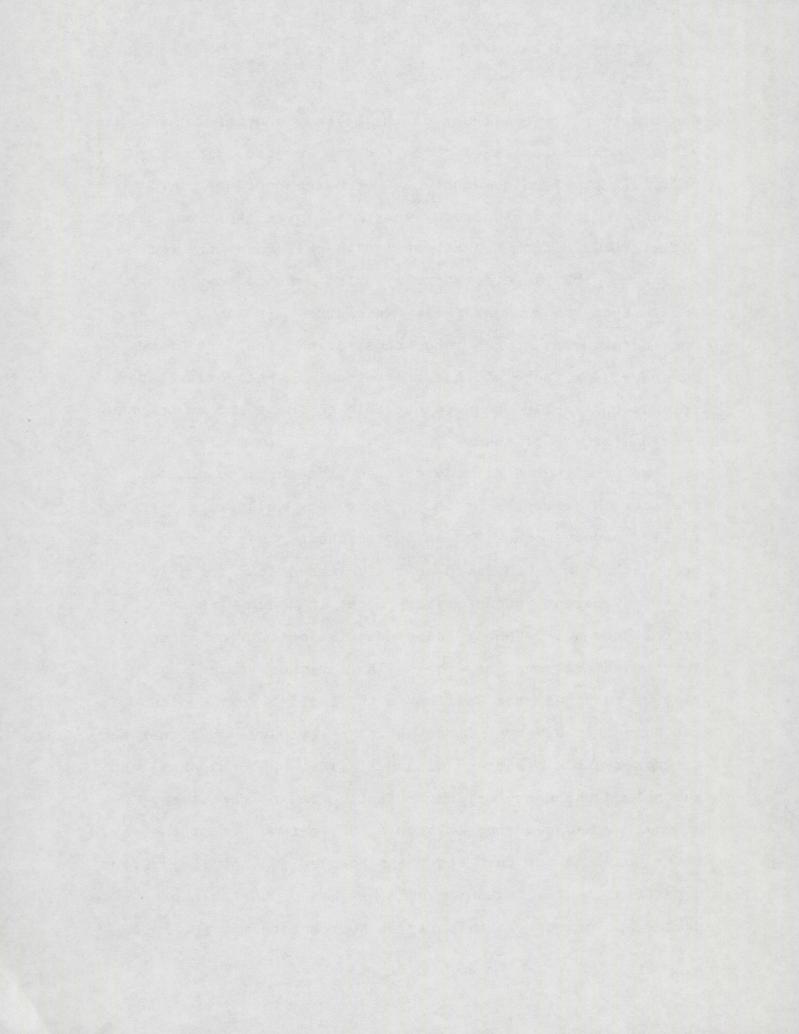
and there were no tourists in Jamaica. The camp commander persuaded a friend of his to open one of the Hotels for us. When "the" day came, we boarded a very primitive train in Kingston and nevertheless managed to cross the Island. Riding through a tropical forest, the trip was magical Every time we stopped people would come on board to sell fruit and crafts. It took a whole day to get to Montego Bay. In Montego Bay, the water was so clear it was possible to see the colored fish swimming around your feet. The sand was pure white, and Palm Trees were all over the beach. for the inhabitants we were the only people there. We were so well taken care of we never wanted to leave this heaven on earth. People would take us around in large buggies to show us the area. In the evening we would all gather in the hotel garden and everyone would urge my father to tell stories. was the best and funniest story teller. He would tell jokes and stories his father had told him about the old days in the diamond factories. Our friends insisted he tell the stories over and over just as I had always done. One evening one of the men laughed so hard, he begged my dad to stop or he would It was so wonderful we could all laugh again. the best medicine of all. We were not happy when we had to go back to the camp, even though everyone always said that every Jew in Europe should be as lucky as we were to be in this kind of a camp.

We also had a seder that everyone in the camp worked on. It

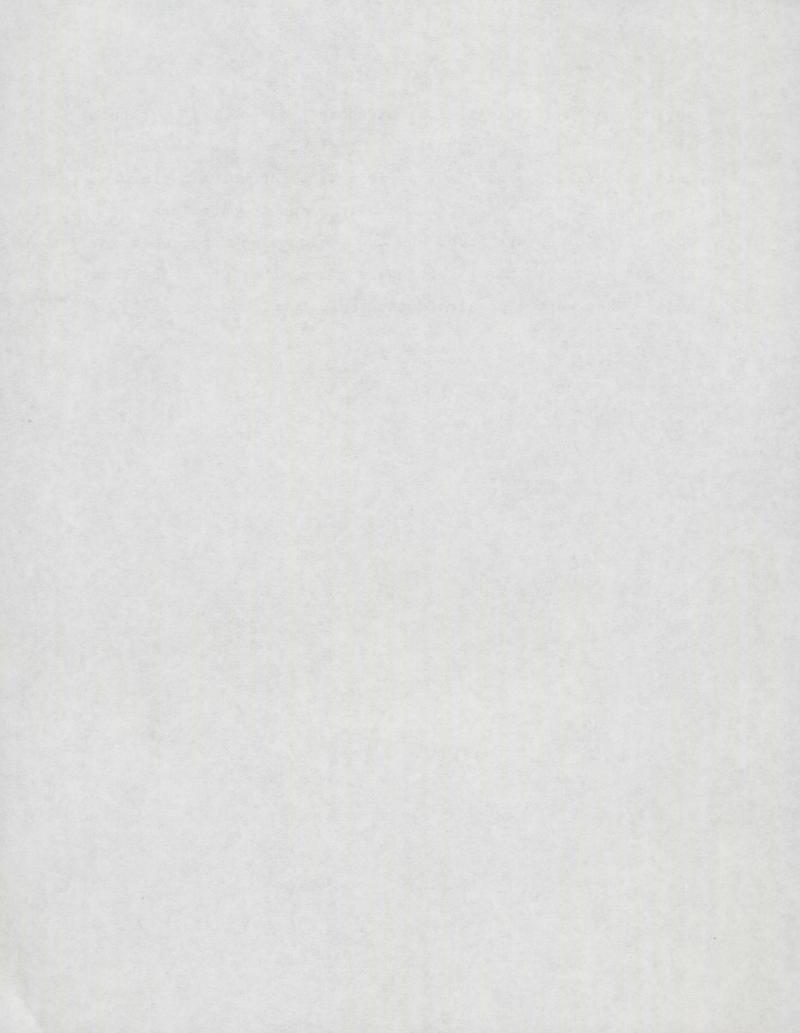


was beautiful. We all sat on the balcony and the cantor (who was one of the inmates) performed the service. The camp officials provided us with whatever we needed; we brought tables from the dining room, sheets to cover them, and dishes and silverware from the kitchen. The children went to the forest to pick flowers, and the adults went to town to get food. Everyone brought their own chairs. It was a most meaningful evening. We sang songs, drank wine, and cried. We prayed for those who had stayed behind. All of us had friends and family who were not able to ecape and no one knew what had become of them.

My parents had already started procedures to go to America. My father's brother, Henry, was in America with his family; and my mother had an uncle (the brother of my grandmother) who had lived in the United States for a long time. My parents began trying to get in touch with them. I wish I knew a more about these negotiations. I can just imagine what it must have been like for those relatives to receive a letter from Jamaica in the British West Indies. I can hear them say "who lives there?" I presume my mother had taken her uncle's address with her. This was Uncle Max, who had helped the Henry Grishaver family come to the states after they escaped from Belgium at the very onset of the war. Later we found out that Henry and Max went to the immigration department in Washington. Uncle Max had brought along a photograph of our whole family we had sent them. He kept



saying to the officials "look at those nice people, we should help them come to our country". He finally succeeded in getting a visa for us. A visa is a document which declares that the country that issues it allows one to enter the country. It was war time, and the immigration department was not very happy to have "foreigners" from other countries come here. They were also afraid that spies would sneak in.



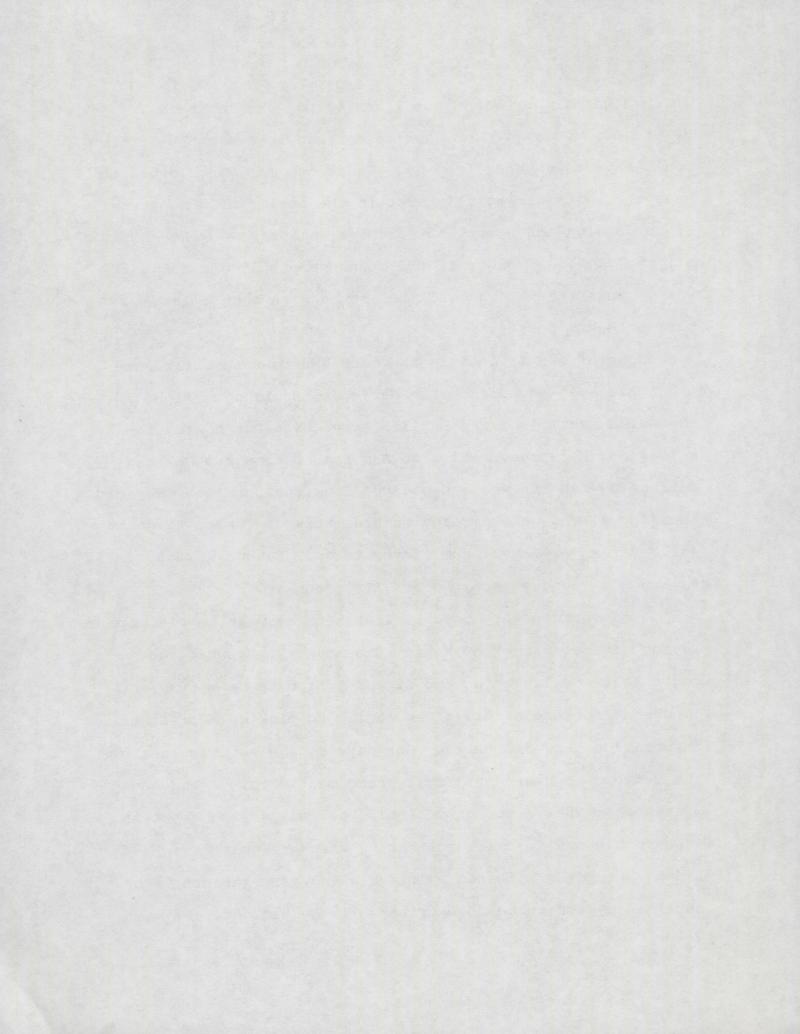
In Jamaica neither Nanny nor I wanted to wear the beads.

We had not declared them when we entered, because the British would have taken them from us. Therefore my poor Dad had to keep them with him at all times in the pocket of his shorts.

Since Jamaica has a very hot tropical climate we wore shorts all the time. I wonder if the other people didn't think it was strange that he was walking around with such a large bundle in his pocket.

Some of our friends in the camp had to send their sons (who had been saved from the Nazis) to England to fight in the Dutch section of the English Army. The Dutch Army in exile send a representative to Jamaica to conscript a hand full of Jewish men who had escaped from the Germans. Why did these boys, who were already so traumatized, forced to go to war. Barend Broekman, our clever friend, had no way of saving his youngest son, Robert, from the Army.

I had become very good at listening to what people were saying without them knowing it. One never knows what you could learn by listening and it had proved to be very important for the safety of my family to pick up a piece of information here and there. One day, as I was coming out of the showers, I heard our family name mentioned. I hid and listened to what a man named Louis Pool was saying about us. I heard him say to a friend that he was sure that "Grishaver" had his diamonds with him. This man was very jealous we had obtained a visa to go to America while he had not. We were



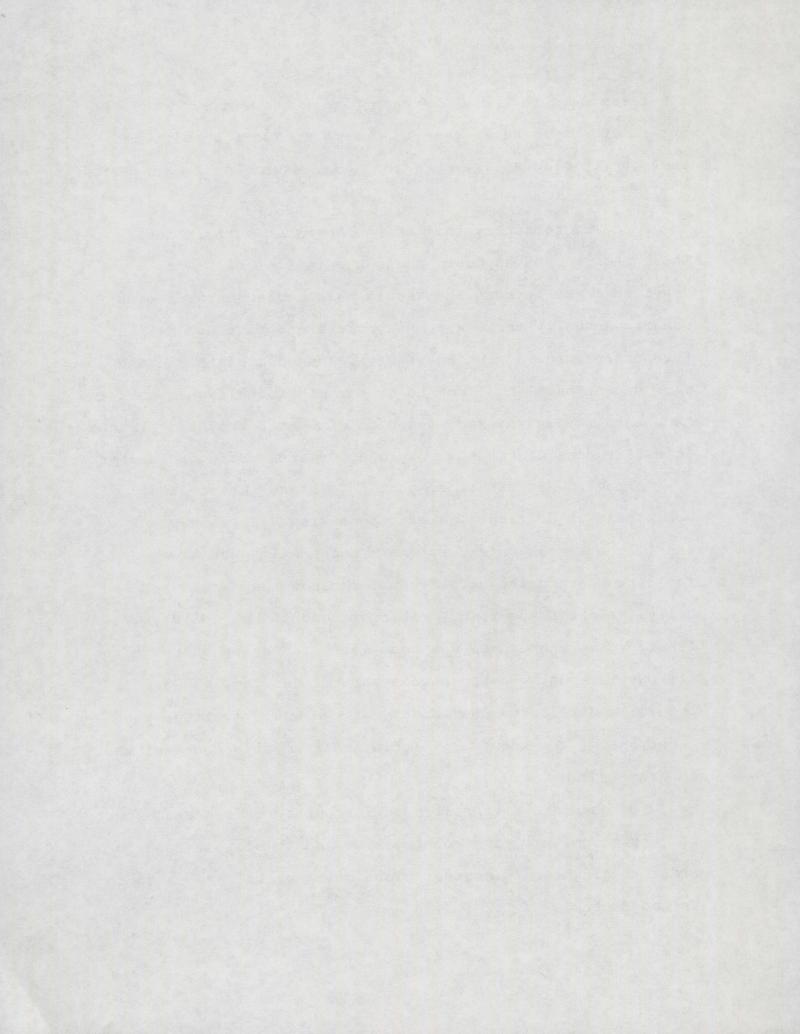
the first ones in the whole camp to get the visas. Many of our friends were never able to obtain an American visa and ended up in places like Curacao, Cuba, Mexico etc. Mr. Pool said

" I am going to report them to the American authorities."

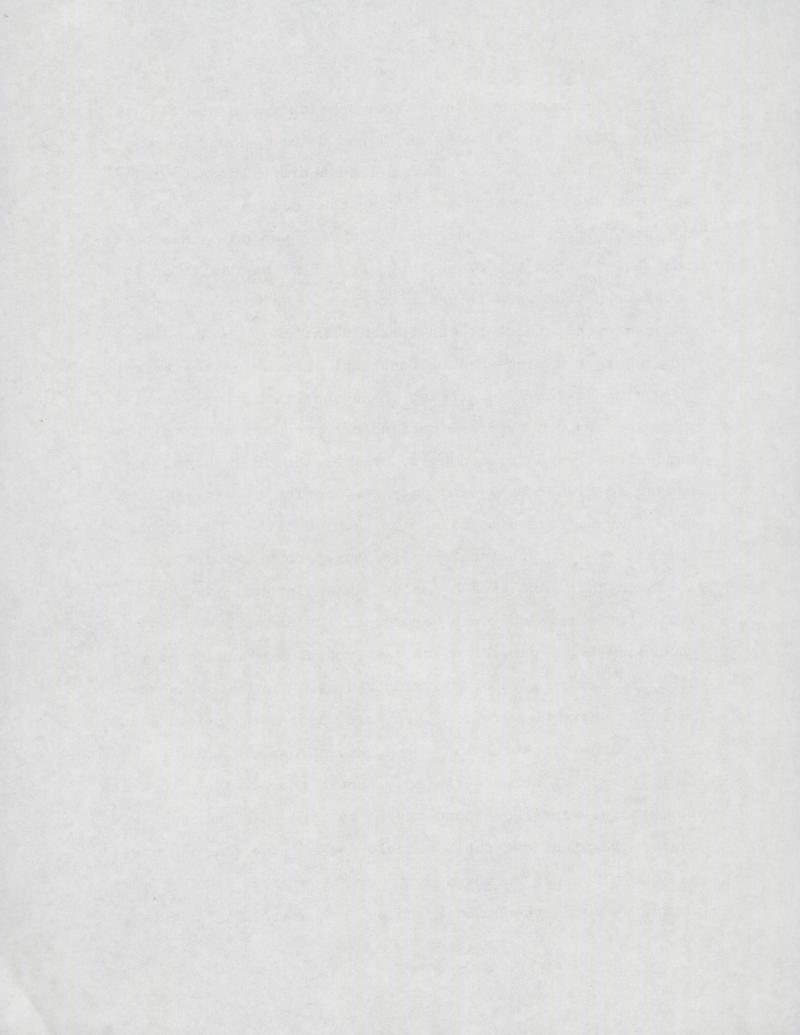
Those things even happened among the few refugees who survived these horrors and should have looked out for each other. Actually there were many close and lasting friendships made during those days, and most of the inmates were decent people. I ran to my parents to tell them what I had heard. They thanked me and told me that they had planned to declare the diamonds anyway when we arrived in the States.

Since it was war time, getting a plane out of Jamaica was almost as difficult as getting a visa. There was only one flight a week on a very small plane which was always full. I learned the word "room", because they would say daily, "there is no room". It took months, but THE day finally came when there was room for us. Saying good-bye to all our friends, who had become part of our family, was painfully difficult. We wondered if we would ever see each other again. We knew very little about America and what was in store for us.

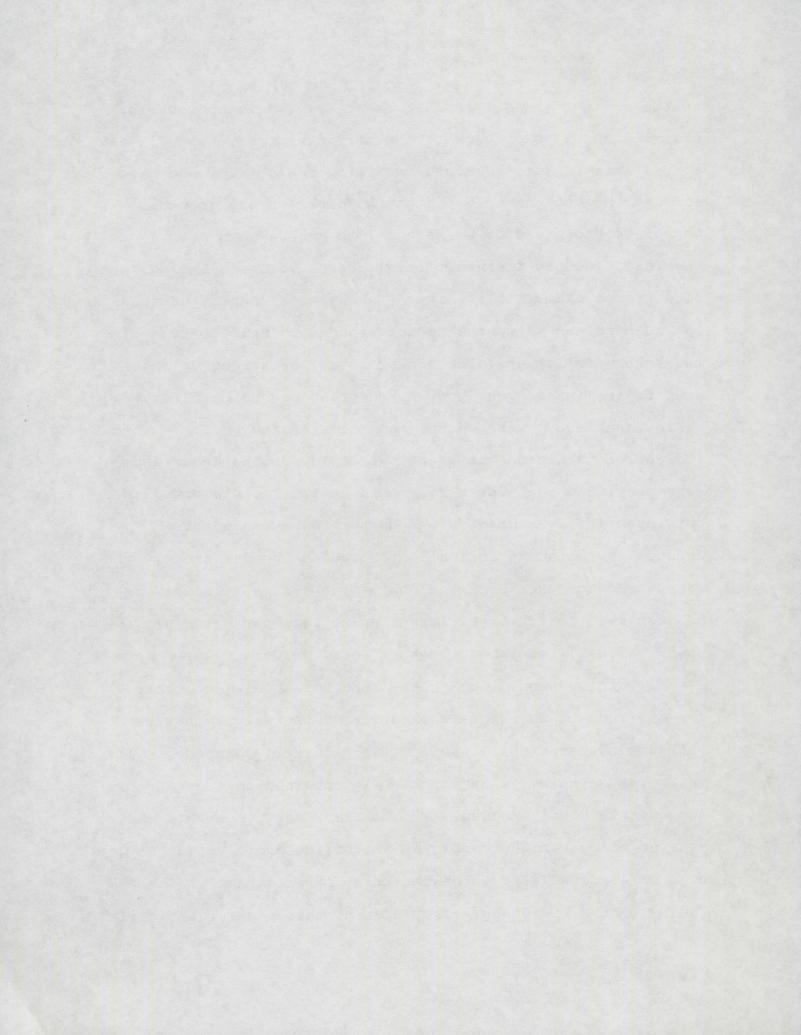
We obtained a transit visa for Cuba. That means a sort of pass to go through a country. We had to stop in Cuba in order to transfer to another plane which would take us to the United States.



The Pan American plane out of Jamaica was a sea plane. It was docked like a boat, and I had to step down to get The inside looked more like a train, because there were two seats and then two facing them with a table in between. There were four sets of these, two on each side of the plane. When the plane took off, it first taxied on the water; and then when it gathered speed, the windows were covered with water. It was terribly exiting. We flew to Cuba where the plane made a beautiful landing on the water; it was great fun. We arrived in Havana, Cuba, and walked into the airport terminal to find our connection to America. Suddenly we were surrounded by police with drawn guns. We had no idea what was going on. They motioned us to follow them. My Dad tried to talk with them, but they pushed him aside. We were put into a police bus, drove and drove for about an hour, and then deposited in an intern camp. We couldn't believe what was happening. We had all the necessary legal papers and certainly had no plans to stay in Cuba; it was as if they had kidnaped us. They took us to barracks where we were to sleep. It was the strangest place. a very large camp with many barracks and many other facilities, but we were the only people there. They left us alone so we wandered around trying to find out where we were and how we might get out. We could see a large guard house, and the place was surrounded by very high walls. After a while, we found the office; and my Papa started to complain

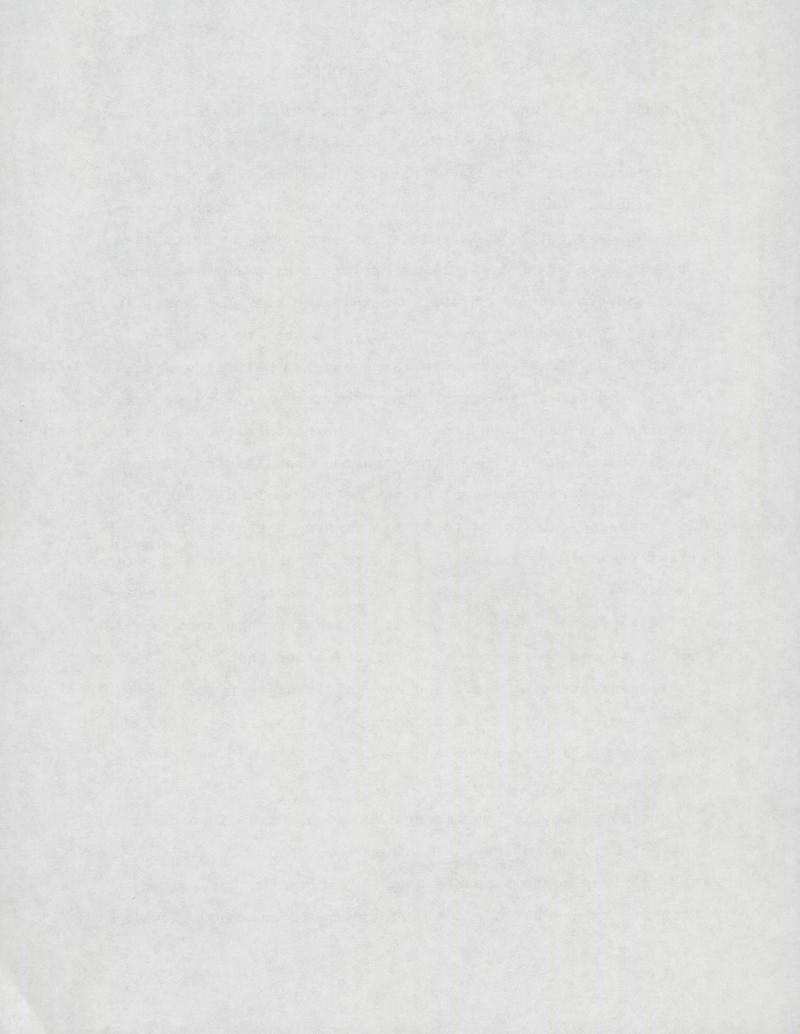


to the officer inside. He was ordered (I have no idea in what language) to go back to the barracks immediately. A few hours later we were summoned to follow the soldier who came for us. He took us to the empty hospital on the grounds where a doctor told us we were all to have a complete physical. We had to submit to all sorts of tests including a fluoroscope exam. It is like an x-ray test where you stand behind a screen while the doctor stands in front of it and the screen is lit up. The doctor moves the screen up and down to see inside your body. My mother had to go first, while Nanny and I were on the same side as the doctor. the doctor turned on the light, we could see the beads and were petrified that the x-ray could reveal the diamonds. We both practically jumped on the doctor to make him turn around. My mother frantically removed the beads; and, by the time the doctor got back to look at the screen, all was fine. We just said that Mom had forgotten to take her beads off. When we finally finished the physicals, we were ushered into a small dining room. Our "hosts" had set an elegant table for the four of us, and a cook appeared to tell us that he had just prepared our dinner. This all really happened. It was a very fine meal, and we happily returned to the barracks and quickly went to sleep. The next morning my parents started to pester the people in the office again to let us go. Three days later it dawned on my parents that what the Cubans wanted was money. They offered these junior officials



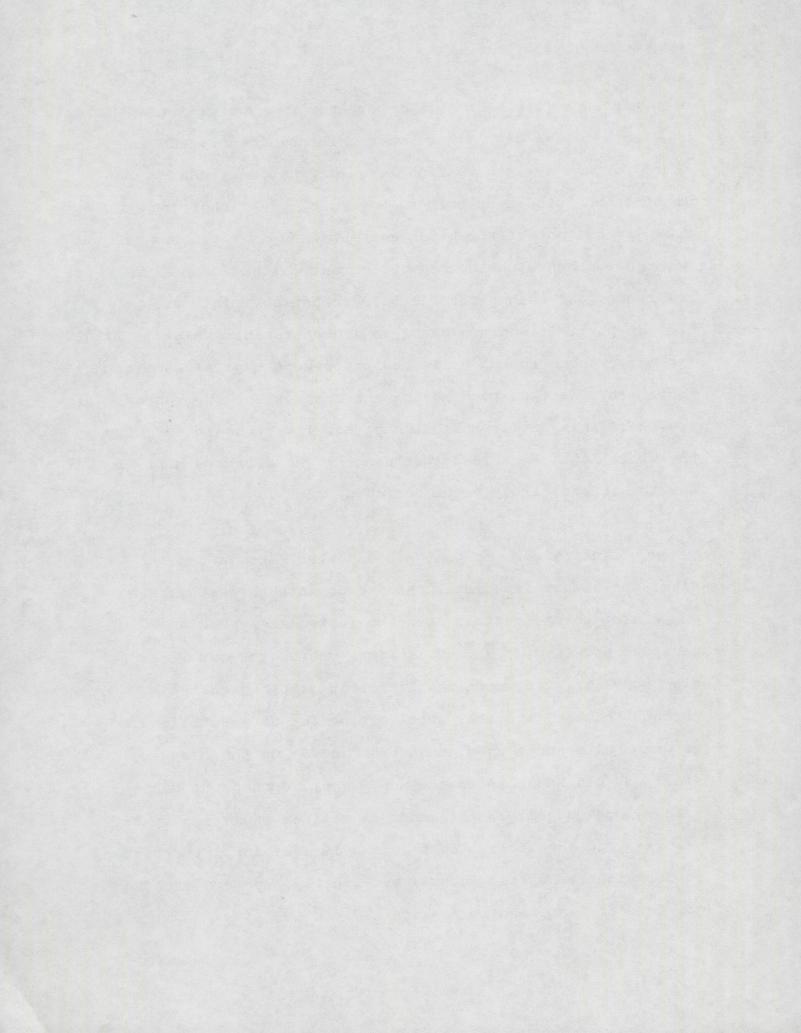
a small sum of money, and out we were. This whole experience seems unreal in retrospect like so many events we experienced. They drove us back to Havana and dropped us in the middle of the city. We knew that getting another plane to America might be quite difficult and would no doubt take some time to arrange. I'll never forget my father hailing a taxi and ordering the driver " take us to the best hotel in Havana"; and the taxi driver really did what he had been asked to do. The rooms were large and had balconies which overlooked all of the city. The room for Nanny and me was decorated in pink, and had a marble bathroom with stacks of thick white towels. My mother ordered room service, and we had a most delightful meal on the balcony. It did take about five days to get out of Cuba, so we were able to do a lot of sight seeing. My father hired a car and driver even though the driver only spoke Spanish. He took us from one cemetery to another, and there was no way to convince him that we really wanted to see something else. After that day we did our own sightseeing. I liked Havana; it was very different from Jamaica, much more like Europe. I especially liked the the many small cafe all over the city. In every way Havana was a most attractive place.

It was necessary for my parents to smuggle the diamonds in and out of Cuba yet have all of them at hand in order to show the American customs people when we arrived in the United States. My parents did not want anyone to know how they had



been hidden. They said "you never know when we will need them again". We didn't know what this new country had in store for us. We had to find a new way to carry the diamonds on this short trip to New York. My father took all the diamonds out of the beads and put them in a tin box; he covered the box with the diamond cement, as had been with the beads, and then glued a little rubber doll in a tree on the tin box. It had now become a souvenir paper weight. At the time, those rubber dolls and trees were typical Jamaican souvenirs. We then put the box and the rest of the rubber souvenirs in a small shoulder bag, and I was chosen to carry the whole lot. We agreed that since I was a little girl, I was the leasts likely to be searched.

We finally went to the United States. We landed in Miami and almost immediately had to go through customs. As we went up to the customs agent he looked at my Dad's passport and said, "Mr. Grishaver, where are your diamonds." Mr. Pool from the Gibraltar camp had gotten through to them, and they were waiting for us. By this time we were quite accustomed to such demands. On the plane to Miami, my Dad had gone to the men's room, opened the paper weight, and put all the diamonds in a linen bag; finally he was ready to show them. Customs and immigration interrogated us for eight exhausting hours, but finally, we were free to go, free at last, and in America.

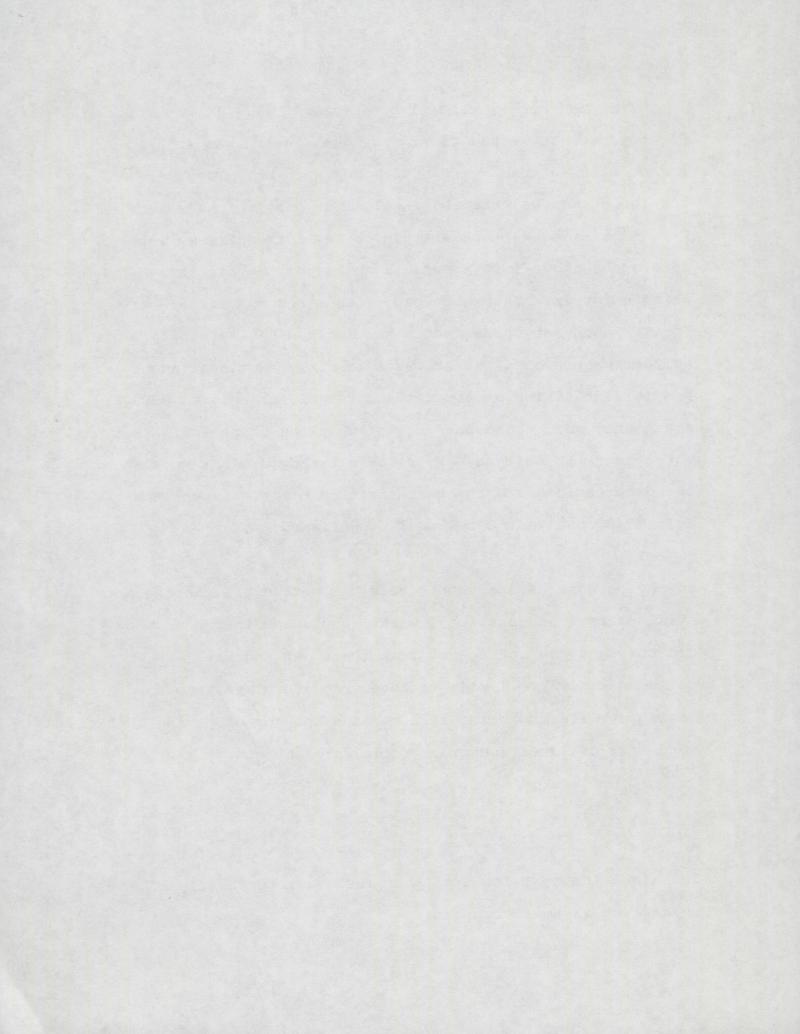


From the hotel, we called Henry and Max. It was the first time that we had talked to them. Henry was shocked (and relieved) that we had diamonds with us. They were convinced that we were as penniless as most refugees were.

From Miami we took a train to New York where we were greeted by about fifty people standing on the platform waiting for us. They were old friends and members of our family. Some of these people had decided to leave before Holland was invaded, so it was a terribly emotional scene. People were asking us about their relatives; and, to our amazement, no one had any idea of what had happened in those three years in Holland. Worse of all they did not know about the deportations and the concentration camps. It was now July 1943, one year after we left Holland.

Why my parents escaped and others had not is a lingering and still unanswered question I wish I could ask them now. How did they get the courage to risk their own and their children's lives. I will be forever grateful to them for saving my life and being able to have the joy of having such wonderful children and grand children of my own.

This is a letter I found that my father wrote shortly after we arrived in America.

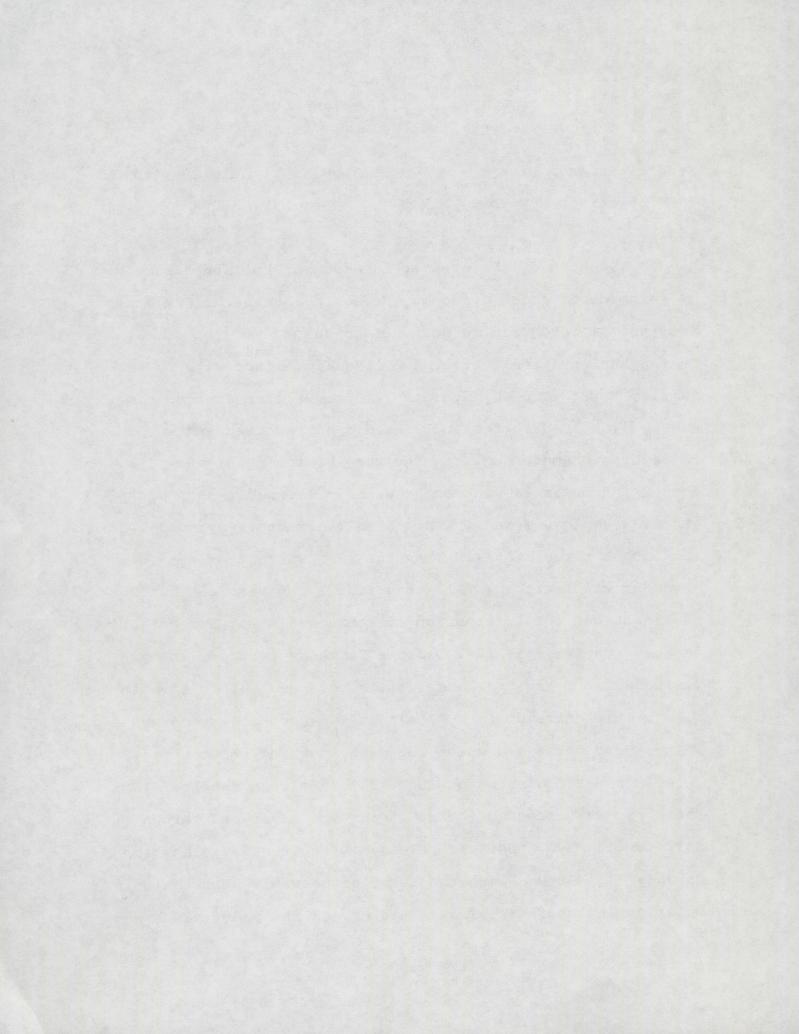


Federal Reserve Bank New York, July 28, '43 70 Pine street New York, N.Y.

Ref.N.Y.558088

May 9, 1940 the day before the invasion of Holland I received my shipment of rough diamonds through by broker M. Guy Tooth, from the Diamond Trading Comp. of London.

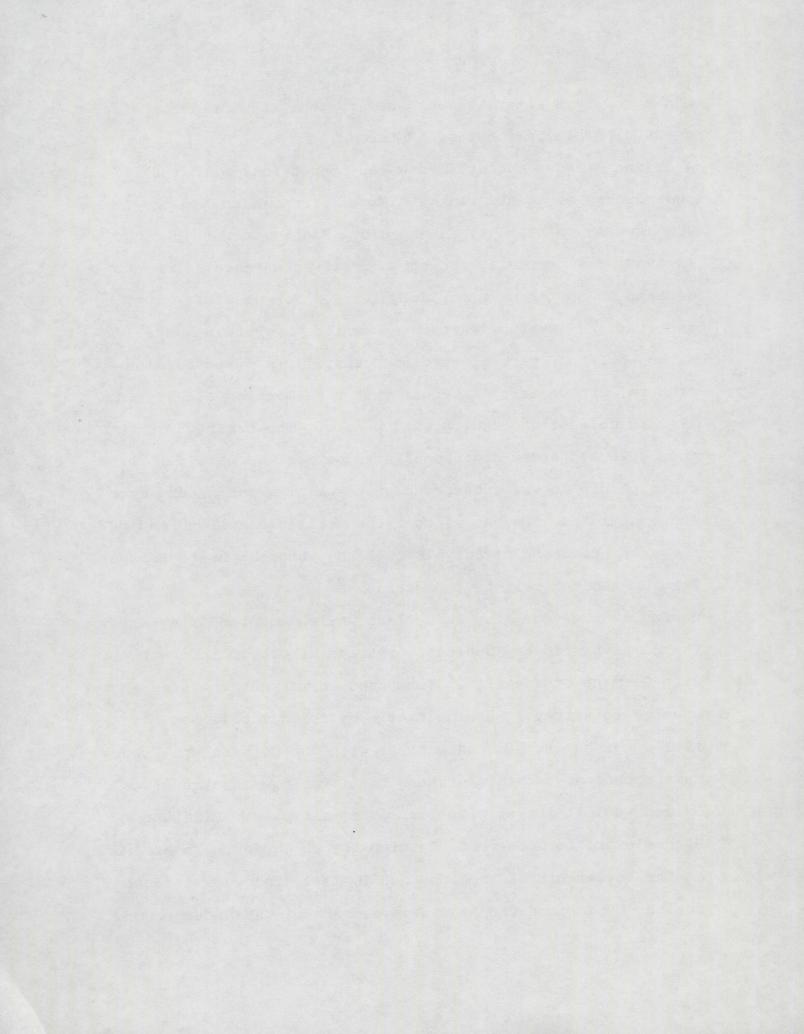
During the invasion I tried two times to escape with my family, First time on May 10th 1940 to Belgium, second time on May 14th 1940 to England. We did not succeed and we had to return to Amsterdam. In the very beginning of the occupation business went on as usual. I owned a shop with about 38 employees and I went on to manufacture my goods what took about three months. Then the largest part of my shipment was finished. All that time I was restless but was unable to get the information if there was a way for possible escape. On April 9, 1941 I got a German supervisor in my business. so I had done some little business before from the time of his entrance in my business I ceased all my doings. Things went worse and worse and dangerous and about a year later, in the beginning of June 1942 my eldest daughter 16 years old was arrested for rowing on the river and thrown in jail for 14 days. She was released without any explanation On July 1, 1942 we heard the rumor of possible deportation of children and whole families. Bad enough the rumor was true



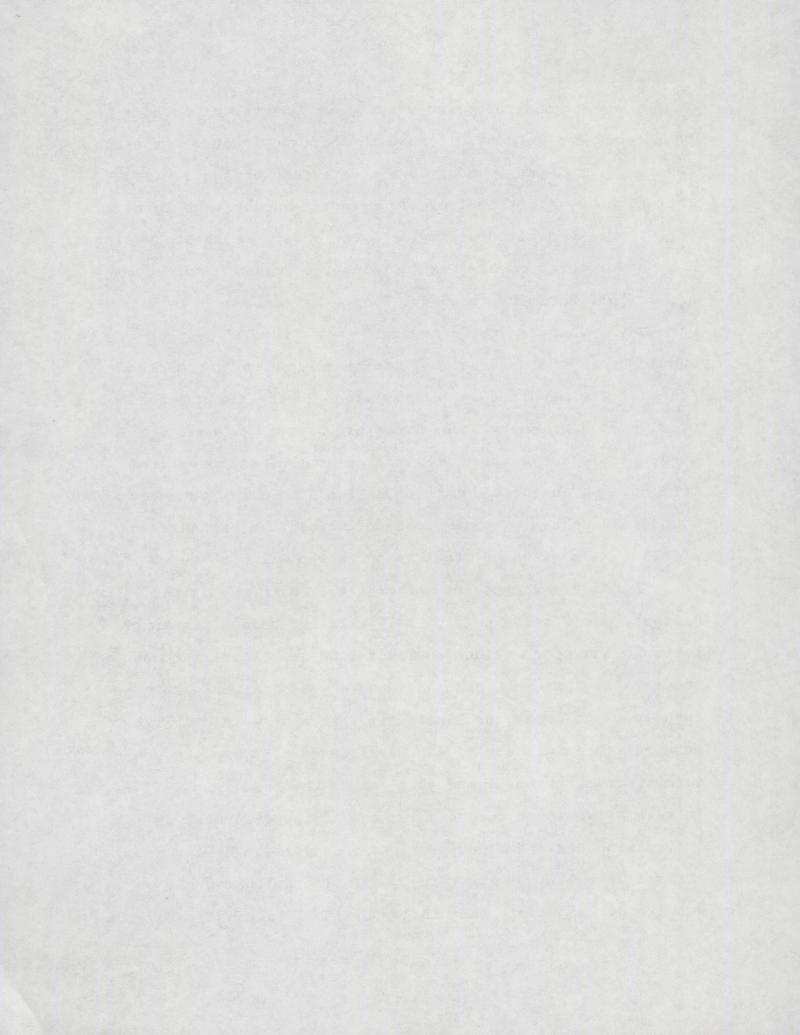
and a few days later the Germans started with the deportation of 3000 people only out of Amsterdam.

A friend diamond dealer I knew had connections with the underground movement. In my distress I spoke to him and he promised me to help us. So he did. Right after this on July 15 1942 my eldest daughter again received a letter from the Gestapo to appear next day July 16 1942 for possible deportation. We knew what this meant. Everything was arranged I took part of my diamonds still in my possession with me, and we left Amsterdam that same morning of July 16, 1942 in care of the underground people. The train chosen by them 8.26 Amsterdam-Roosendaal were we arrived safely. There other people of the underground were waiting for us and from Roosendaal they brought us to Nispen still in Holland and on the same afternoon of July 16 1942 they brought us to Esschen Belgium about a half hour distance.

During my two year stay in Holland while occupied, I swear that I never did any business or trade direct or indirect with Germans at any time. From Esschen we went the same evening to Antwep. We hided there by friends till Aug. 1, 1942. Our guides had connections with the Belgian and French underground movements and those took from now on care of us. Guided we left Antwep with four other escapees. First to Brussels and to Moeskroen, Belgian-French border. We arrived at the border on the same day Aug 1, 1942, and we all found shelter by farmers who also were members of the underground.



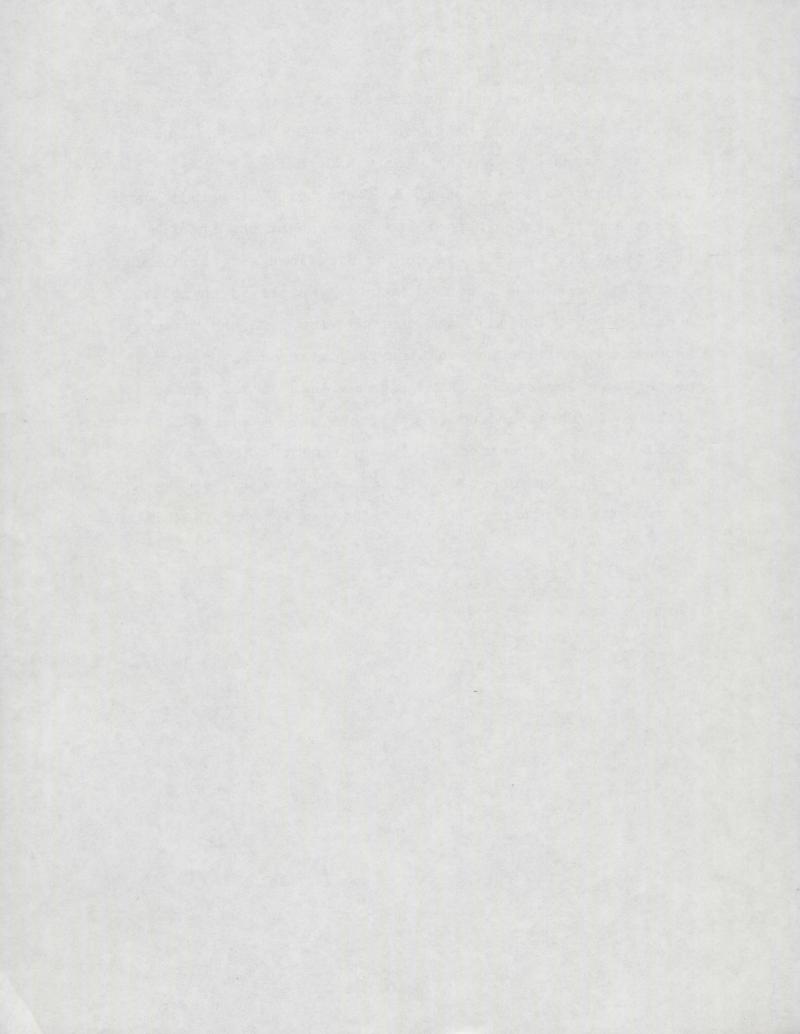
Those people knew there was exactly one quarter of an hour that there was no control and with this knowledge we crossed the border between 6 and 6:15 the afternoon of Aug. 3, 1942. That night we slept in Tourcoin France. August 4 we left for Paris.were we arrived safely. In Paris we were sheltered in a barn for three days. Next morning the guides came back and we left Paris by train for Lyon. We arrived in Dyon the same day. There we got a new guide who informed us that we should cross the demarcation line that night to unoccupied France. The mayor of a little village in the neighborhood of Dyon gave us an empty house, were us was told to wait for 7 other people among those 3 French prisoners, escapees from Germany. Seven succeeded to cross the line among those my youngest daughter. We six lost our way in the darkness and with the help of one of the Frenchmen who was with us we found by dawn a farmhouse. After a talk with the farmers wife she was willing to hide us, till our guides came back. Later we heard our guides couldn't find us. After two days the farmers wife went out and found a young farmer who agreed to help us to cross the line. All that time we didn't know were our child was and of she was safe or not. So the young farmer brought us over and just across the border in Fetterand, we found our daughter one of the escapees was stayed with her. Next day we left this village by car and arrived in the night Aug. 7 in Lyons. The following day we went to our consulate then called Office Neerlandais and from



that moment the Netherlands Government to care of us. In Lyons we met hundreds of Dutchman who had flood Holland by the same means but what we didn't know before.

In the first days of September we got our exit permit and with the help of the Netherlands government the Spanish visa on Oct.24. Now we left France for Barcelona were arrived on Oct 26. Three days later to Madrid. We stayed there till about November 11, 1942 and then to Vigo were the steamer Marques de Camillos was waiting for us arranged by the Netherlands Government. From Vigo we left on Nov. 16 1942 with 176 Dutchman aboard to Jamaica B.W.I. We lived there in Gibraltarcamp maintained by our government. After our American visa was granted we left Jamaica by way of Pan Am Airways transit Cuba. On July 8 1943 we arrived in Miami U. S. of America.

Sworn before me this -----.





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JENNY G. WEINSHEL
PII Redacted



8210?



my parents New York 1944



Namy + 2 across the Street from our house



Name Jather myself may during the war



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